THE PRACTICAL TEACHING OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

A. W. FOX, M.A.

***

LUKE

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

THE GIFT OF

SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
OF LONDON, ENGLAND

The Practical Teaching
OF
Jesus of Nazareth

AS FOUND IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

THIRTY-FIVE LESSONS

COMPILED BY
ARTHUR W. FOX, M.A.

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TO

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CHRISTIANS

OF

THE TODMORDEN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION BIBLE CLASS

WITH WHOM I HAVE SPENT SO MANY HAPPY HOURS

15263

PREFATORY NOTE

THE encouragement given to the compiler by his previous set of lessons based on the Gospel according to Matthew has emboldened him to offer to the public this second series of similar lessons based upon the Gospel according to Luke. He hopes to have avoided repetition in the illustrations; but in so great a number this is perhaps impossible. The Lessons themselves have appeared from week to week in 'The Christian Life,' and the compiler has received gratefully many kind expressions of approval. As in the former series the main purpose is to bring out the practical teaching of the Christ, so that it may have its mighty influence in the formation of the character of the taught.

This little book is not meant as a class-book to be placed in the hands of a whole class. It is designed to help the teacher, who will do well to prepare the lessons with its assistance before coming into the class. He should always add illustrations drawn from his own experience and deal frankly with his class. The teacher's own additional illustrations may be added in the blank places left at the end of each lesson. The compiler ventures to hope that this second series of lessons may be of some little help to the teacher in the always difficult task of preparing his work. He would repeat once more, that it is good to prepare all lessons prayerfully, so that the words spoken may pierce to the heart of the taught.

In conclusion he would tender his grateful acknowledgments to the Subcommittee of the Association, which has carefully read the manuscript and given many valuable suggestions.

A. W. F.

TODMORDEN, *July*, 1911.

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THE PRACTICAL TEACHING OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

AS FOUND IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Lesson I

MY FATHER'S BUSINESS

Luke ii. 41–52

(41) And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. (42) And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; (43) and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; (44) but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: (45) and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. (46) And it came to pass after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: (47) and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. (48) And when they saw him they were astonished: and his mother said unto him, Child, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. (49) And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? know ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (50) And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. (51) And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these things in her heart. (52) And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and in favour with God and man.

Point of the Lesson.—The point lies in verse 49, 'Know ye not that I must be in my Father's house,' or 'employed in my Father's business.' Taking the second meaning, for which there is quite as much authority as the first, we see at how early an age Jesus, after his talk with the Jewish Rabbis (teachers) in the temple, knew that he must be about the business of his Father and ours. Before his day the Jewish priests and teachers were wont to address Jehovah as Father. It was for him to reveal God as Father in a deeper and tenderer sense, who was Father alike of Jew and Gentile. God's business is goodness. That is what we must busy ourselves with all the days of our lives.

41. Faithful Jews who were able to afford the journey went up to Jerusalem at least three times a year to the national feasts as ordered by Deuteronomy (xvi.). These were the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Of them the Passover was the most important. Even the poorest went up to this, as often as they could. On account of the dangers of the way they went in little companies or *caravans*. To avoid going through Samaria they usually went a part of the way on the eastern side of the Jordan.

42–45. When they had kept the feast, they set out on their return. The journey would last several days, since some of the caravan would go on foot and those who rode on white asses would keep them company. Amid the bustle of the beginning of the journey Joseph and Mary had not missed Jesus. They thought that he might be with some of their friends and neighbours from Nazareth, as the children of those who formed the caravan would be in the habit of playing with one another. But after a time they grew anxious, and looking through all of their company they found not Jesus. Then they were in great anxiety and set off back at once to Jerusalem.

46. They looked everywhere for their child, but could not find him. At length they went into the temple, and in one of the courts where the teachers met their pupils, they found Jesus sitting amongst these teachers (doctors) and learned men, listening eagerly to what they were saying, and answering the questions which they asked him.

47. The learned men wondered at his clever answers, and at the promise of wisdom which he gave. A little child, who has been brought up carefully by pious parents, has kept the purity which God gave him at his birth. Such a one can ask questions, which the wisest cannot answer, and in his singleness of heart can give answers, which the wise cannot always give.

48. Mary, when she saw her son, spoke to him in a tone of not unreasonable complaint. She felt that it was hard for him to have stayed behind, thus causing grave anxiety. So she said, 'Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.'

49. Then the child only twelve years old, who had been so deeply interested in the sayings of the great teachers of his race, who had learned that Jehovah was Father of his people, gave one of those searching answers which he was in the habit of giving during his ministry, 'Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' It was a beautiful answer, and gives to all of us, whether old or young, the true occupation of life. Boys and girls should mark it well and remember that it was spoken by a boy of twelve years old.

50. Joseph and Mary being, as it would seem, simple-minded people, did not understand the hidden meaning of the words. They would not realize that he spoke of God his Father and ours.

51. Jesus went home with them to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. Let boys and girls note this, and obey their fathers and mothers.

52. Jesus, as he grew, grew in favour with God and man, because he was good. If we would imitate him in this, we must be good.

N.B.—A caravan was not a van, such as gipsies use. It meant a body of men and women going on a journey together, carrying baggage, food, and merchandise with them. Sometimes they carried tents, which they could pitch, when they rested.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Our Father's business. To most boys and girls God seems a long way off, because they cannot see him. They cannot see the wind, but they can see its effects. They cannot see their thoughts, but they can see their results. So in the world about them they may see God's works. They can feel his Spirit speaking directly to them in their consciences. It is that inner feeling of happiness when we do right, of unhappiness when we do wrong, which we call conscience. By this God speaks to us, and shows us what he would have us do. What then is 'our Father's business'? In one word it may be summed up, *goodness*. We have to be good, loving, and kind to one another. When a boy goes to school and is set to learn a lesson, he knows that he ought to learn it, that it will be good for him to learn it. If he does not learn it, he will be wronging his father and mother who sent him to school, that he might be educated and not grow up ignorant. When boys and girls come to Sunday school, they come to learn how to live. Their teachers are older than they are, and can help them by their experience. If they are noisy and inattentive, they are not only being unkind to their teachers, they are doing wrong against God. If they will try to learn patiently and well, they will be about 'their Father's business.' When Theodore Parker, the great American preacher and friend of the negro-slaves, was a little boy,

he had a stick in his hand. As he was going along the road he saw a tortoise. Boy-like he was going to lift his stick to hit the little animal, which had done him no wrong. But before he struck, a feeling rose in his heart which would not let him strike. Amazed, he ran into the house and told his mother, asking her what that feeling was. She was a good woman and gave him a wise answer. 'Men call it conscience,' she said, 'I call it the voice of God. Whenever you feel it in your heart, obey it and you will do right.' Theodore Parker did obey that Divine silent voice. When he grew to be a man, he preached against slavery with all his great powers. So dangerous was his action, that often he had a pistol by his side in his study to prevent a runaway slave from being given back to his master. Both when he refrained from hitting the tortoise with his stick, and later when he pleaded for the freedom of the slave, for truth and national righteousness, he was about 'our Father's business.'

A home in a northern town was very small, while the family was large. One of the children, a little girl, was dangerously ill, and she had to be kept in the living-room in a cot near the fire. The rest of the children did not realize how ill their little sister was, and how needful it was for them to be very quiet. The doctor said to the eldest boy, who was not quite thirteen, 'John, you are the eldest; you must keep the younger ones quiet for your sister's sake, and then perhaps she will get well.' The words sank deeply into the lad's heart. He did his utmost to keep the healthy children quiet, so that the little sufferer did get well. That boy was about 'our Father's business.' A number of girls were going out to play one warm summer evening. They had been at school most of the day, and were longing for a game in the fresh air. But one of their band of friends was very ill, and there was no one to cheer her up save her mother.

Suddenly God put it into the heart of one of her playmates, one of the very party who were going out to their game, to ask the mother how her child was. 'She is very ill,' was the answer, 'and she would so like to see some of her class-mates.' Jane told this to her companions, but none of them was willing to leave the bright evening to go and sit in a dull sick-room. Then she said, 'Very well, do as you like; I will go and sit with Mary.' She gave up her play, and did not listen to her comrades, who were very fond of her and who wanted her with them. She went into the cottage; she sat in the darkened room and waited upon her sick friend. She won sweet peace and bright happiness from her self-denial. She was about 'our Father's business.' Let boys and girls remember that it is their duty, as it will be their truest pleasure, to be 'about their Father's business' in showing themselves kind, loving, and self-denying.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Two of these will be found in Dickens's great story of 'Bleak House.' Chapter xxxi., Esther Summerson's kindness to her sick maid Charley. Chapter xlvii., Mr. George and Mr. Woodcourt's kindness to Jo.

2. In this great book the whole character of John Jarndyce is that of one, who went 'about his Father's business.'

3. Tom Thurnall's service to Elsley Vavasour (Kingsley's 'Two Years Ago,' Chapter xxiv.). These should be *told* not *read* to the class.

Lesson II

FRUITS WORTHY OF REPENTANCE

Luke iii. 1–14.

1) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, (2) in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. (3) And he came into all the region round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins; (4) as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight.

(5) Every valley shall be filled,
And every mountain and hill shall be brought low;
And the crooked shall become straight,
And the rough ways smooth;
(6) And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

(7) He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him, Ye broods of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (8) Bring ye therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. (9) And even now the axe is also laid unto the root of the trees; every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (10) And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? (11) And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. (12) And there came also the tax-gatherers to be baptized, and they said unto

him, Teacher, what must we do? (13) And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. (14) And soldiers also asked him saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither exact *anything* wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

Point of the Lesson.—This lesson treats of the need and duty of repentance for wrongdoing. That was the message of John the Baptist, whose teaching was sterner than that of Jesus. John said, 'Repent and flee from the coming wrath.' Jesus said, 'Repent and believe the glad tidings of God's forgiving love.' If we do wrong we must repent of it and bring forth 'fruits of repentance.' In other words, we must not only be sorry for what we have done, but ask forgiveness and try never to do the same wrong again.

1–2. The 'fifteenth year' of Tiberius was A.D. 29. Palestine was divided into four smaller provinces, the governor of each of which was called a tetrarch, or 'governor of a fourth part.' Pilate, the governor of Judæa, was never so called, but always 'the governor.' Herod is Herod Antipas or Antipater, one of the sons of Herod the Great. His brother was Philip. Of Lysanias little is known. Luke has made a mistake in giving the high-priesthood to two high-priests. Caiaphas was high-priest at that time and Annas his relative had held the office, but been deposed from it.

3. John the Baptizer came preaching in the 'wilderness,' that is in the low-lying and little cultivated Jordan valley, at a convenient place for baptizing.

4–6. The words are from the Second Isaiah (xl. 3–5). In the original they do not refer to John, but to the return of Israel from its Exile. Luke uses them to express in symbolical language the return of the Jews from sin. He may have seen a prophetic meaning in the words, of which Isaiah was unconscious. In any case they do express clearly the fact that John was the forerunner

of Jesus. The words in Isaiah describe the work of those pioneers, or road-makers, whom an ancient king sent on before him to make a road for him, where there was none, when he was about to take a journey.

7. John's call to repentance appealed to the fears rather than to the love of his hearers. He called them 'broods of vipers,' a most scornful term to use of his people, who believed themselves to be especially chosen of God.

8. It was the wrath of God, which he warned them to avoid. He did not bring them to the love of God, as did Jesus. He bade them not to pride themselves upon their descent from Abraham. That would not save them. They could only be saved by true repentance which found its fruit in worthy deeds.

9. He used a strong comparison from gardening. In the orchard a fruit-tree which bore no fruit would be cut down and used for firewood. Only the tree which bore good fruit would be allowed to stand.

10–11. When the crowd asked him what they were to do—note the words *to do*—he bade them be brotherly to their brothers in need; that would be a sure sign that they repented of their misdeeds. Repentance if not followed by good conduct is worth nothing.

12–13. The tax-gatherers also were moved by his words and asked the same question, 'Teacher, what shall we do?' His answer cut at the root of their particular vice: they were in the habit of extorting more taxes than were actually due and of pocketing the surplus. That was why they were so bitterly hated, no less than because they gathered taxes for an alien government.

14. Even hard Roman soldiers, who may have been sent to keep order amongst the crowd, were moved by the power of the desert preacher. They too asked the same question and received a fitting answer. They

were not to do violence, rob, or be discontented with their pay.

In all of these instances the point of John's teaching is summed up thus :—' Repent of your sins, amend your ways. Repentance without good conduct is worthless.'

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fruits worthy of Repentance. When we have done wrong, our first duty is to repent. That does not simply mean to '*say* that we are sorry.' We must ask for forgiveness, do our utmost to right the wrong, and try not to do it again. The word in English really means *turning back.* The original Greek word means ' changing the mind,' meaning a complete alteration of the mind from its evil thoughts and words.

A boy had to go an errand in the night-time, when the sky was overcast with clouds. He had been warned not to take a certain turning, which seemed to be a short way, but which was dangerous. Like a true boy in one sense of the word, just because he had been told not to take the turning he at once took it. He could not see far in front of him, but he could see the lights of the little town in which he lived. That town seemed to be getting further and further away from him, as he went along the forbidden path. He looked before him, then behind him. Yet still he went on for a time ; when suddenly he came to a great landslip in the road, which cut it off. Had he not been careful, he would have fallen over the edge and been dashed to pieces. Then he began to be sorry that he had not done as he had been bidden to do. But if he had been content with being sorry, he would have stopped where he was. He knew that he had to do something more than that. He had to turn back and to go along the usual road. He knew that he would be late home, because he had followed his own will and disobeyed his mother, who had sent him out. He finished his

errand: when he got home and his mother asked him why he was so late, he had to tell her that he had disobeyed her. In like manner when we have done wrong, we must turn straight back from wrongdoing and do right in the future. Right-doing is the true fruit of real repentance.

A boy got into the evil habit of betting. He began with small things such as marbles and the like, but he went on to bet with money. He got work in an office where he had to handle some money. He did not give up betting. For a long time he was out of luck and he lost on everything. He wanted money to pay off his debts. Then he began to be sorry that he had ever been so foolish as to bet. At first he was strongly tempted to steal some of the money which he handled—he would have said to *borrow* it. But at last he plucked up his courage. He could not go to his father, who was a poor working-man earning small wages. He went to his employer and made a clean breast of matters. He told him how he had laid money upon this and that, and how he had lost, until he owed £5. He begged his employer to lend it him, with the assurance that he would pay him back the sum, as soon as he could. His employer determined to give him a chance, and lent him the money upon the condition that he should give up betting at once and pay back the loan by weekly instalments. The boy promised and did 'bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.' He was often tempted by his idle companions to bet again. But his answer was, 'No, I have learned better. I have turned over a new leaf and burned my betting-book.' Slowly he paid off the £5, and when it was done his employer said to him, 'I was afraid the money was lost; now I know that I can trust you.' That boy grew to be much trusted and died a partner in the firm, which he had once nearly robbed. He had not only repented of his betting habit; he had turned quite

away from it and begun to live a useful and thrifty life.

So we see that real repentance for wrongdoing is not the same thing as simply saying that we are sorry. We have to do more. We have to make good our wrong, if we can, and at the very least to leave it behind, never repeating it. It needs some strength to do this; but if we ask God to help us, we shall find it easier. We must never be too proud to own ourselves in the wrong, or to try to set it right. If we have to eat humble pie, the sooner it is over the better. When it is done and our repentance has set us on the right way, we shall find ourselves happier and better than we have been before.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Dickens's 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' Chapter xliii., especially the latter half, where young Martin makes his repentant confession to old Martin.

2. Charlotte Brontë's 'Shirley,' Chapter xxxvii., the latter half, which treats of Robert Moore's prayer for forgiveness to Caroline Helstone.

Lesson III

A PROPHET IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

Luke iv. 16–30

(16) And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. (17) And there was delivered unto him the book (roll) of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

(18) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Wherefore he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
(19) To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

(20) And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened upon him. (21) And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears. (22) And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son? (23) And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country. (24) And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country. (25) But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over the land; (26) and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. (27) And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. (28) And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things: (29) and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the

city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. (30) But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

Point of the Lesson. Jesus said, quoting a Jewish proverb, 'No prophet has honour in his own country.' Men are slow to believe that the man, whom they know from daily intercourse, can have anything worth their hearing to tell them. We must be content to live our life truly and to utter a message, if we have one, never thinking of what those about us say to us or of us. We are not on earth to win praise of men, but to serve God and man.

16. Jesus had begun his ministry in or around Capernaum; he had taught in many of the Galilean synagogues, before he came to that of his own town. On this Sabbath (Saturday) he took the roll of the prophets from the synagogue-attendant and stood up to read, as was the custom of all teachers in his day, when the Scriptures (our Old Testament) were read.

17–19. The lesson for the day was from the Second Isaiah (lxi. 1–2). The Jewish Scriptures were divided into sections, which were used for reading and expounding on each Sabbath, like the 'Lessons for the day' in the Church of England service. The section for that Sabbath was the passage, in which the great prophet of the Exile was explaining his mission to his people in the midst of their sufferings. It had no reference to Jesus in the mind of its utterer, who felt himself called to preach good tidings to the poor exiles and deliverance to them, when the year came in which they were to leave Babylon. To the words of the older prophet Jesus added 'And receiving of sight to the blind,' by which he meant spiritual blindness, and referred to the blinded souls of his townsmen who rejected him.

20. Having read the passage from the roll, he gave it to the attendant and sat down, as did all the teachers

in Israel of his day, while his hearers either stood or sat according to their pleasure.

21. Jesus referred the words to himself as best explaining his own higher mission to free men from captivity to ceremonial and sin, to open their blind eyes to the truth of God.

22. The hearers, who had known him from his childhood, were amazed at his beautiful manner of address, and said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' They could not believe that one whom they knew so well, could have anything to teach them.

23–24. Jesus felt at once that his townspeople listened to him with impatience. Doubtless in their foolishness they wondered at his presumption in filling the place usually occupied by one of their own Rabbis. He applied to them an old proverb (*parable* or *comparison*) 'Physician, heal thyself.' He pictured them as saying these words about him who came to heal them from their soul-sickness. When they complained that he had begun his work at Capernaum, he answered them by the great truth, 'No prophet is acceptable in his own country.' The men there are too familiar with his presence to listen readily to him.

25–27. He went on to drive home his point by quoting two instances from the past history of his race. During the great famine Elijah had found refuge and food with a widow of Zarephath in the Gentile land of Sidon, though there were many widows in Israel at the time. The great prophet was honoured and received by a foreign widow alone.

So too of all the lepers in Israel, none was cured. It was Naaman, a Syrian and Gentile, alone who was healed.

28. Such plain speaking, in which Gentile excellence was set above that of the Jews, was hateful to his hearers, who were proud of their race. It was the more hateful

in that they could not contradict the gracious speaker. Hence their blind souls were filled with wrath.

29. Nazareth was built upon a hill at several miles distant from the Lake of Galilee. One side of the hill was precipitous. The Nazarenes thought to rid themselves of the troublesome teacher by hurling him down this steep rock.

30. But when they had brought him thither, so great was the power of his personality, that none of them could do it, and he went unharmed from their midst.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Be true to yourselves and never mind the evil opinions of others. Boys and girls cannot be prophet-preachers, at least not in many cases; but they can be true to themselves, so that their silent example will be felt and honoured. They can 'let their light shine,' the light of kindness and honest goodness. In a certain home the father, who had few other faults, was given to using bad language. His words were terrible in their sound, and if he had meant them, they would have been more terrible still in their meaning. One evening he had come in from his work angry and tired, and he had found that his tea was not quite ready. He began to swear with all the force in his power, when he received a wonderful reproof. His little daughter, not more than five years old, laid her hand on his lips, saying, 'Daddie shouldn't swear.' The dear little maid was true to her own pure kind little heart, and she checked her father in his bad habit.

When an apprentice comes out of his time and is a teetotaller, he is expected to pay his *footing*. His pledge will not allow him either to drink himself, or to give others the means of drinking. Then he has the chance of being 'a prophet in his own country.' If he refuses, he will be called all manner of names. He will be abused because

he is a teetotaller, because he is a Puritan. But if he does what his conscience bids him do, he will win something far better than the praise of careless men. He will win God's approval through his conscience. It will cost him much strength to do this; but if he will ask God to help him to be true to himself, he will not ask in vain.

An eccentric man lived in a large northern town. At least those who knew him called him eccentric, which perhaps meant that he led a more consistent life than theirs. No one could tempt him to go into an inn. He often stopped those whom he heard saying foul and filthy words, much to their astonishment. He never gave to public funds, though he was not poor. He was connected with a chapel, which he helped generously but quietly, but in which he took no office. Hence both those who never went inside the chapel and those who attended it, called him hard names. The one styled him a 'Puritan' with a few additional adjectives; the others called him unregenerate, and doubted if he were really a Christian. Still he lived in that town, letting his light shine amid mockery and suspicion from the many, who did not truly know him. When he died and was carried to a hideous town cemetery, those who had mocked and distrusted him were surprised to see the crowd which followed his simple coffin undecked by a single wreath. The poor, the halt, the maimed, the troubled, followed him. For them he had cared, holding in his heart the words of Jesus, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.' When those who had mocked or suspected him, came to look back upon his life, they recognized too late that a prophet of God had been taken from them. They honoured his memory dead, when they might have made his life easier by honouring him while he was living amongst them. His is an example to all boys and

girls, no less than to all men and women. The boy, who will refuse to join his companions in tormenting a half-witted man, will be called soft and other agreeable boyish nicknames of spite. But if he persists in his kindness, he will be happier far than his more thoughtless comrades who had uttered their jibes at his expense.

That is a lesson, which all can learn, to be true to themselves, to the prompting of their own kind hearts, to live their best, to be loving to all. They can remember how in his own country men tortured, mocked, and slew Jesus by a horrible death. They can bear in mind that they will not have to endure sufferings like his. They can try to copy his strong gentleness, 'who when he was reviled, reviled not again.'

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' Part ii., where Prejudice and Ill-will keep throwing mud at Great Grace, none of which sticks to his white robes.

2. Miss Cooke's 'Story of Theodore Parker,' to show how he kept true in the face of much persecution and hatred.

Lesson IV

THE CALL OF LEVI

Luke v. 27–28

(27) And after these things he went forth, and behold a tax-gatherer, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and he said unto him, Follow me. (28) And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him.

Point of the Lesson. We are called to follow, that is to imitate Jesus, and to do what he told us to do. We are called to make great sacrifices in being disciples of Jesus. We must allow nothing to stand in the way of doing what we know from his teaching and our own inspiration to be good and true and loving. We shall not be Apostles like Levi, who was also called Matthew: but we can all learn to be faithful followers of Jesus, trying to lead self-denying and useful lives like his.

27. When Jesus left the house where he had been teaching, he saw Levi or Matthew, who was a tax-gatherer. These tax-gatherers were usually hated by their own people, as they were in the habit of exacting more taxes than were due and taking the difference for themselves. Moreover, they were collecting taxes for an alien government and always reminded the Jews that they were not free. This same Matthew may perhaps have been sitting near the town-gate of Capernaum, when Jesus saw him. Jesus had made Capernaum the central place of his teaching, when his own townsmen of Nazareth had rejected and tried to murder him.

Matthew would have his table before him, his bag for receiving money, his reed-pen and his ink-horn, and his tablets or pieces of parchment for keeping his accounts. He was a collector of tolls for the foreign government, which was represented in this place by Herod Antipas. These tolls would be levied upon the merchandise brought along the great road which led southward from Jerusalem. As has been said, his own people would hate him for his office. But Jesus, who had no such prejudices, must have seen something attractive in the man, which induced him to call him.

28. The moment that Jesus called him Levi or Matthew followed him. It would cost him a great struggle to leave behind his old life. He may have been a man of considerable wealth, since most tax-gatherers took advantage of their opportunities to enrich themselves. Nor did those who were robbed by them, find a ready ear to their complaints. But Levi did not hesitate. He left behind him his familiar work, his home-ties, his old friends amongst the tax-gatherers and followed Jesus. The call to a higher and nobler life must have struck right home to his heart. Long before he may have desired to rid himself of his unpopular occupation. When the opportunity came he was quite ready to embrace it. We hear little further about him. He was probably the author of the older Gospel written in his native Aramæan tongue, on which our Gospel according to Matthew is based. That is all that we know of his future life, save that he was with Jesus on his missionary journeys in Palestine.

Boys and girls sooner or later in their youth receive a call to follow Jesus. That does not mean that they will become ministers of religion, though some of them may take up this work. It means that they are called from the beginning to choose the right and leave the wrong, to be loving and good. Nor must they suffer anything

to hinder them from obeying this call. Sometimes they will lose something, sometimes they will be compelled to give up their own desires or something advantageous. But if they are ready, as Levi was, to make the sacrifice, they will win God's blessing and sweetest peace from him. Let them remember to give up their lives to God's service, as Jesus taught them to do : then they will do their daily work well and help others to live. One such call comes to most of them. When they have reached a certain age, they may be asked to become Sunday School teachers. Let them try to do this holy work. Let them try always to do something to help forward the work of their church and school.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Call of Levi or Matthew. Most Jews had two names, one used in the home, one employed by the Gentiles around them. Hence Levi had also the name of Matthew, by which he is better known. Jesus called him, while he was at his ordinary work, to be a disciple. He obeyed the call of the great Teacher and lived henceforth a life much harder than he had been accustomed to live, while he was a tax-gatherer. Jesus calls boys and girls to-day to be his disciples, just as surely as he called the little children of Galilee, when he said, ' Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' He calls us to grow up to be good and kind, to love and serve God the Father of all of us, to love and serve one another. When a boy in a class in a Sunday School has been reading the story of Jesus and learning how he loved and helped the men and women around him, and when he longs to do the like, Jesus is calling him. When he leaves school and is on the point of beginning to be selfish and to quarrel, sometimes the picture of the suffering and patient Jesus comes into his mind, and sometimes the

desire to be selfish and quarrelsome leaves him. Then Jesus is calling him to be good and loving. When a girl has lost her mother in early childhood, she remembers some of the lessons, which that dear mother taught her. She thinks of how she was taught to pray, 'God bless father and mother, sisters and brothers.' She recalls the time when her mother taught her how wrong it was to be unkind. Those precious memories and many more save her from much thoughtlessness, selfishness, and help her to grow into a kind and thoughtful woman. Her mother is calling to her from that other life to be faithful and true to her lessons. We have never seen Jesus; but we can read something of the story of his life and many of his words. We cannot hear his voice, as his disciples heard it by the waters of Galilee or in old Jerusalem. But we can read what he said and did, and thrill to the influence of his pure spirit. Thus he calls us to follow him, to be less selfish, less quarrelsome, less unkind, less thoughtless. Let boys and girls answer that call, think less of themselves and seek to help forward the happiness of others. Let them be obedient to their parents and teachers, and above all else to their consciences. Then they will grow up to lead blessed and happy lives. They will be disciples of Jesus, who said, 'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say unto you?' We must obey his teaching and imitate his life; then we shall answer his call.

To men and women that sacred call comes no less surely than to boys and girls. The younger they are, the easier it is to obey it. Nor must they hesitate, lest the opportunity be past, which will not occur again. Long ago there lived a young man, who spent most of his youth in idleness and worthless luxury. He was a Roman citizen of some wealth, whose mother was a lowly and faithful Christian. Her son at first thought little of his mother's faith, little of her lowly and beautiful

life. He chose to 'see the world,' and saw the worst of it. There is a picture of him painted by a great painter, in which he is represented in a drunken sleep lying on the couch, while his mother with an aching heart is looking at him. But at last the call came to him, for which she had prayed and longed and hoped. He had been a great student, and one day he seemed to see Jesus calling to him out of heaven. It was a vision, but it altered the whole of his life. He left his debauchery behind him, he forsook his old light-hearted and evil-minded companions. He became a Christian, and consecrated all his wonderful powers of mind to serve the faith of his adoption. He wrote much, and the Christian beliefs of to-day are more his than the simple teaching of Jesus. He laboured on and worked, till he became the greatest of the Fathers of the Church. Augustine of Hippo became a Christian saint, whose beautiful character attracted hosts of men to him. So he received his call and aswered it. He made great sacrifices, but they repaid him a thousandfold. His example lives and will live, so long as the story of the Christian Church is told amongst men.

Boys and girls will not perhaps become great amongst men and women like Augustine of Hippo. But the same call comes to them to leave behind selfishness and to be good and helpful, loving God and all others. A time comes to them, when they have to choose whether they will be bad or good, and woe to them if they choose to be bad. In a home a boy had a sickly and ailing mother, whose heart was wrapped up in her boy. When he was about fourteen years old, he began to think about his mother, how weak she was and how her work in the house tired her. Then arose in his heart the question, 'How can I help my mother, who has done so much for me?' He knew what he ought to do: yet at first he suffered much in doing it. When he came in from his

work, he was often tired and longed to go out with his companions after tea. But he saw how weary his mother was, and he determined to stay in and help her as much as he could. He continued to do that, till she was called from him. With her dying breath she blessed her good son, who had been the staff on which she had leaned so long. Then he knew that he had done right, and his mother's blessing rested in his heart and cheered him through all the trials of life. That was his call: he obeyed it cheerfully. Let other boys and girls follow his example, and they like him will be abundantly blessed.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Many examples may be found in Rev. A. N. Blatchford's little book, 'Landmarks in Religious History' (Essex Hall), especially the stories of Zwingli and Erasmus.

2. See also 'The Story of Theophilus Lindsey,' 'Theodore Parker,' and 'Dr. Channing,' all by Frances E. Cooke (Essex Hall).

Lesson V

HELP THOSE WHO NEED HELP

Luke v. 29–32

(29) And Levi made him a great feast in his house: and there was a great multitude of tax-gatherers and others that were sitting at meat with them. (30) And the Pharisees and scribes amongst them murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the tax-gatherers and sinners? (31) And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. (32) I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Point of the Lesson. This lesson follows closely on to the last, though its point is different. Levi, or Matthew, wanted to take a handsome farewell of his former friends. Doubtless he hoped that Jesus would have the same influence upon them, as he had had upon himself. The tax-gatherers and sinners, that is, those who were careless about the Jewish Law, were despised by the leaders of the people, amongst whom the Pharisees and scribes were conspicuous. These would not have eaten with such men, nor could they understand how a prophet like Jesus did that willingly. His answer to them was, 'I am come to help those who need my help.' Boys and girls should remember that great lesson and show themselves willing to help those who need their help.

29. Before leaving his old life, the tax-gatherer gave a farewell feast at his house, to which he invited Jesus and his disciples. The door would be open, so that

those outside would be able to see those inside reclining round the tables. Eastern people did not sit down to dinner, as we do. They had thick cushions arranged round the table or tables and reclined on one hand while they used the other to help themselves to food and drink.

30. It would seem that he had ventured to invite some of the Pharisees and scribes, who were said to be 'amongst them,' that is, amongst the tax-gatherers and others invited to the feast. Of course the words may refer to those who were standing outside the door of Levi's house; but that is not their plain meaning. Yet it is hard to see how such could be a tax-gatherer's guests. At all events, they despised the company in which they found themselves. They do not seem to have expressed their indignation openly to Jesus. But they spoke plainly to his disciples, asking them why they ate with such riff-raff? That is the real meaning of their contemptuous question.

31. Jesus divined by their looks or overheard what they had been saying to his disciples. According to his usual manner he answered them gently by the words of a popular proverb, the meaning of which he amplified for them. He had little sympathy with their contempt for tax-gatherers and sinners. These he knew, needed help most of all, even if they were not so bad as the Pharisees and scribes thought. He said 'The healthy do not need a doctor.' In other words, it is the doctor's business to treat the sick and cure them, if he can. We should not think of sending for a doctor, until we became ill. These poor folk, according to the Pharisees and scribes, were morally sick and needed their help. But they were unwilling to give that help, lest they themselves should be polluted. They would not, even if they could help it, so much as touch them with the hem of their garments. That, said Jesus, was not the way to help those who needed help and needed it sorely.

32. He went on to say that his mission was not to the righteous but to the sinful. There is an implied rebuke in these words to the Pharisees and scribes, who took little trouble to persuade sinners to be righteous, but rather contented themselves with distant denunciation. He also pointed to their kind of righteousness, which consisted rather in close attention to righteousness than in strict right-doing. Of course all of the Pharisees are not included in this censure, but only those who deserved it. It is the glory of Jesus, that he felt the deep need of the sinful, and spoke words of peace and hope to their anxious hearts. His own pure heart yearned over them to save them from themselves, and to lead them to holy living. He awoke them to repent of their wrongdoing, so that they found pardon and peace. He loved to associate with them. He never thought of himself as being defiled by their touch, as did the Pharisees and scribes of the stricter sort. He spoke words of love and comfort, trust and abiding hope to them, thus bringing them back from their wanderings to his Father and ours. We should try to help all those who need our help, so far as we are able, as Jesus did.

ILLUSTRATIONS

We must help those who need our help. Jesus bids us to help those who need our help. If boys and girls can keep other boys and girls from doing wrong, they will have done a mighty service to those whom they have helped. Our missionaries go out at the cost of much self-denial to help the savages to lead better lives. J. G. Paton, for example, went to the New Hebrides, which lie to the north of Australia. He gave up the comforts of home-life and an easier means of earning a livelihood at home. The inhabitants of these islands are amongst the lowest of human creatures. Yet he did not shrink from going amongst them, learning their

language and trying to help them in every way. So too he prevented the traders from cheating the ignorant natives, who were still their brothers and sisters. The traders took their revenge upon him in the vilest of possible ways. They got one of the natives on board one of their ships, where an infectious disease was raging. When he caught the infection, they sent him amongst his fellow-savages, until many of them had caught the plague. Then they laid the blame of their own evil conduct upon the good missionary. In spite of this wicked deed he regained his influence and lived long amongst his flock, who loved him with 'a love passing the love of women.' So he helped those who needed his help, and brought many poor souls to worship the true God and to lead better lives. His book will repay a careful study by boys and girls. They will find it as interesting as any story of adventure, while it has the advantage of being true.

Many another great and true man, many another good and true woman, have devoted themselves to helping their brothers and sisters. The life of Dorothea Lynde Dix shows how one woman was able to help the prisoners. She realized that many of these were feeble of mind, and so committed the crimes for which they were punished so severely and without giving them any hope of living another life, when they left their prison. She gave up much comfort and spent long hours every day in trying to help and lift up these. She realized that prisoners needed her help far more than the honest men and women who were round about her, and she helped them without stint of cost or effort. Boys and girls can help to keep other boys and girls out of mischief, if they will try. Moreover, if they try and persevere, they will win great happiness. Of course they must keep out of mischief themselves, if they are to help others to do so.

A touching case of helpfulness at supreme cost occurred

in a northern village many years ago. There had been a frost of several days' duration ; a deep dam, through which a brook flowed, was frozen over, but not strong enough to bear anyone in all of its parts. There was a high wall round it, save in one place, where there was a gap fenced with slender poles across it. The children were all most eager to go on the ice and slide over its smooth surface. At the gap stood a boy, who did his utmost to keep the rest of the boys and girls from disobeying their fathers and mothers by going upon the treacherous ice. He succeeded in keeping them off for the whole of the Saturday holiday, and so saved them from all but certain death. On the Sunday morning he was going with his younger brother to a distant school. Both of the lads were up early, because they had more than a mile to walk. Suddenly, in defiance of his mother's express command, the younger boy determined to go upon the ice, which was a little thicker, but no safer than the previous day. His brother was not strong enough to force him to keep to the road. On he went, calling out in glee to his brother, ' Come along, don't be so foolish : it is grand. I told you that it would be quite safe.' Scarcely were the last words out of his mouth, when a great cracking sound was heard, and the next moment he was struggling in the cold deep water. His need was great then, and his brother, who had done his best to prevent him from disobeying his mother, went cautiously on to the ice to save him, if he could. He tried to some purpose : he did succeed in saving that disobedient boy, but he lost his life in the task. When that younger brother grew up to manhood, he had always the thought of his dead brother with him, who had saved him at the cost of his own life.

The example, which is from real life, has a twofold teaching. First boys and girls should do what their parents tell them to do, and they will be spared much

trouble, as well as spare their fathers and mothers much pain. Second, they should be ready to help one another at whatever cost. When they see another doing wrong, they can at least warn him. Then they may be able to save him. Let them try with all their heart, and God's blessing will be upon them.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Frances E. Cooke's 'Dorothea Lynde Dix' and Florence Gregg's 'Story of Bishop Colenso' (Essex Hall).

2. See also the characters of 'Esther Summerson' in 'Bleak House,' and 'Agnes Wickfield' in 'David Copperfield.' In the last book see especially Chapters xxiv. and xxv. In the former book see Chapters xxx. and xxxi., in the last of which Esther helps Jo and Charley.

Lesson VI

THE NEW AND THE OLD

Luke v. 33–39

(33) And they said unto him, The disciples of John fast often, and make supplications; likewise also *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink. (34) And Jesus said unto them, Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? (35) But the days will come; and when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then will they fast in those days. (36) And he spake also a parable unto them; No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old. (37) And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself be spilled, and the skins perish. (38) But new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins. (39) And no man having drunk old *wine* desireth new: for he saith, The old is good.

Point of the Lesson. Jesus meant by his words, 'My disciples cannot be expected to fast, so long as I am on earth with them.' It is possible, though not necessary to the context, to believe that he was already haunted by the shadow of death. Then he went on to say that his teaching was new teaching, which in some respects was fundamentally different from the old Jewish Law with its numerous fasts. It was a free religion, whose law was love, in which fasts were not needed. Moreover, the people were not ready for the new faith, since they had found the old faith good (39). When we really

want to lead a new life, we must not try to patch it upon the old, but get rid of our old bad habits and start anew. When Saul of Tarsus saw his vision on the road to Damascus, he put behind the old faith, which had been his inspiration, and put on a new faith in strong opposition to the old, yet founded upon the old.

33. Only one special fast was demanded of the Jews, that just before the great Day of Atonement, which is obligatory to-day. It is a literal fast, in which the Jews abstain from all food and are quite faint before it is over. To this great fast the disciples of John the Baptist and of the Pharisees had added many others, hoping thereby to win the favour of God. Jesus enjoined no such trials of the body upon his disciples.

34–35. The answer of Jesus was characteristic in its gentleness and beauty. ' The sons of the bride-chamber ' were the bridegroom's friends who attended him at his wedding and who joined with him in the wedding-feast. These, Jesus says in effect, were his disciples. So long as he was with them and the feast spread before them, they could not be expected to fast. But when he was gone from them, they would fast for very sorrow. To-day, those who imitate and obey Jesus, are his disciples, from whom he is never absent. They therefore have no need to fast. In other words, if our religion be sincere, it should be filled with trust and gladness. God our Father, who is love, did not mean his obedient children to be filled with sorrow and to make themselves sorrowful by needless ceremonies.

36. It must always be remembered that a ' parable ' is literally a ' comparison.' It is usually ' a story told to illustrate some deep truth.' A wise man would never think of cutting out a piece from a new garment to patch up an old one. The new cloth would be stronger than the well-worn old cloth, and so would pull out the stitches and make the hole bigger. So a new life will

not agree with an old and worse life. The new life must make the heart and conduct new. The new religion which Jesus taught, must do this for those who follow it. It cannot be grafted upon an older and more rigid ceremonial religion; nor can it be simply grafted upon an older and less true life. The new life of unselfishness must be the life of all true disciples of Jesus.

37–38. The same lesson is taught by a homely example with even sharper point in these verses. In the East wine was stored in skins, as it was in Spain in the days of 'Don Quixote,' which gradually grew thinner and weaker with age. Into such old skins it was of no use to put new wine. That would ferment and make gas, which would press upon the weakened skins and burst them. New wine must be put into new and strong skins, if both are to be preserved. So the new life, which all of us should try to lead, should issue from a new heart, a heart resting in the living God and filled with purity and unselfishness. Such a new life will be preserved to help and to bless others no less than the one who lives it.

39. Jesus in this verse shows his deep pity for those of his own countrymen, who did not understand his message, but clung firmly to their old religion. He uses a comparison easily understood by those in the habit of drinking wine. The old wine is always preferred by these because the flavour is more mature and more delicate. Hence Jesus means that the Jews had grown so accustomed to their old faith, that they could not believe that his new teaching was better. Thus he showed his compassion for them. It should be said, that the true reading is 'the old wine is good.' To the Jews their old religion had been good, as indeed it is. Yet here was a truer and holier faith freely offered to them. Men often fear to leave old habits of thought, though freer and truer thought is offered to them.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The New and the Old. Many boys and girls try to lead two lives at once, an attempt which is certain to end in failure. They try to be good and bad, careless and careful at the same time. For example, they will come regularly and punctually to the church and school, and when they are there they will disturb others by their bad behaviour. This is neither right nor kind. It is good to come to church and school; but when they are there, no boy or girl has the right to annoy others by whispering or bad behaviour of any kind. Once a boy made a raft by placing two planks of wood together, while he set a third across them, thus expecting them to keep together. He had forgotten that he needed at least a fourth plank to make his raft even tolerably secure. He set it afloat and got upon it, standing with one foot on each of the planks, which he had set side by side. When he had pushed himself by a long pole towards the middle of the pond, the two planks gradually came farther apart, and he was soused into the water. That is the common fate of old and young, who try to lead two lives at once. The one takes away from the other, and the effort is thrown away. The life all boys and girls should try to live is the Christian life. That is a beautiful and happy life, because it is a good life. First in the home they should learn to be obedient. Some boys and girls profess to be obedient; but when they get outside of the house they at once do just what they have been forbidden to do. 'Do not go and play on the edge of the canal,' said a mother to her boys. 'All right, mother,' they shouted, cheerfully, and she believed that she could trust them. When they were out of sight of the house, one of them said to the others, 'Come down to the canal, I have seen a jolly nest there.' 'But we promised mother not to go near it,' said another. 'Oh!

she'll never know,' replied the first. By and by he persuaded the rest, forgetful of the fact that God saw and knew their disobedience: they went down to the canal, when one fell in and came home miserably wet. Until the wet one came back, all the time that they were away, the mother believed that her boys were keeping their word to her. All the while they were false to their word, and yet led their mother to think that they were keeping it faithfully. That is common enough amongst boys and girls. They have been told by their mother to be good at school, when they have never tried to be good. She is hard to persuade that her children are disobeying her, because she loves and trusts them. So they have been leading a double life.

Moreover, it is of small use to try to get rid of a bad habit simply by cultivating a good habit and by stopping there. The best thing is to get rid of the bad habit root and branch first. If we want to pull up a weed, it is of little use to leave the root in the ground, since another weed will grow from it soon. If a boy has got into the habit of swearing and filthy talk, he will not cure this habit by being kind. It is good beyond a doubt to be kind; but the bad habit must be plucked out with all the force possible, if it is to be got rid of. The new wine needed a new wine-skin to keep it satisfactorily. The new habit of self-denial needs the loving heart to make and keep it the rule of life. Boys at school are often in the habit, which is cruel and unkind, of bullying the smaller boys and girls. Brothers are often very rough and overbearing to their sisters. These are bad habits, usually the outcome of thoughtlessness, which leads inevitably to selfishness. If they are kind to bigger boys or girls, to other people's sisters or brothers, that in itself will not make them cease from bullying the little ones, from being rough and rude with their own brothers and sisters. They need to have the loving heart,

which will allow them to hurt no one for the mere sake of mischief, or for anything else, save where it is needful to be stern in order to help them, when they are going wrong.

The religion of Jesus can make all things new to his faithful followers, whether they be boys or girls, men or women. But the first thing needful is what is sometimes well called 'the changed heart,' that is, the heart which thrills with unselfish love for others, which truly loves the great Father of all. That will make a new life possible, the life which Jesus lived, which he bade us to live. That is the life we come to church and school to learn how to live. May our God help us to live it.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Dickens's great story of 'Martin Chuzzlewit' shows how the younger Martin had two great faults of which he was unconscious, obstinacy and selfishness. He had to root out these before he could live a true, generous life. See especially Chapter xxxiii.

2. So, too, Mr. Dombey in 'Dombey and Son' had to be taught to appreciate his daughter by misfortune. See especially Chapter lix.

Lesson VII

THE SABBATH AND MAN

Luke vi. 1–5

(1) Now it came to pass on a sabbath, that he was going through the cornfields, and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. (2) But certain of the Pharisees said, Why do ye that which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath day? (3) And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read even this, what David did, when he was an hungred, he, and they that were with him; (4) how he entered into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests alone? (5) And he said unto them, The Son of man is lord of the sabbath.

Point of the Lesson. The wise use of the Sabbath is taught in these verses. Jesus protests against what is known in our day as the 'Puritan Sabbath,' such as holds sway in some parts of England and in more places in Scotland. He says 'The Son of man is lord of the sabbath.' It is doubtful if he is referring to himself as the Messiah, who was also called 'the Son of man.' More probably he means, speaking generally, 'Man is lord of the sabbath.' He does not mean that we should misuse our Sabbath—our precious day of rest—by riot and indifference. He does mean that we should use our Sabbath as a day of real rest.

N.B.—Of course he was speaking of the Jewish Sabbath, which was on the seventh day of the week, namely, on our Saturday. When we apply the lesson we must

understand it of the Christian Sabbath, or our Sunday.

1. The Jewish Sabbath was a day of comparative hardship in the time of Jesus, on which no work of any kind was done, no meals were cooked, no burden was to be carried, while a longer walk than about a mile was not to be taken. The day had lost its old joyousness, as indeed had happened to all of the great Israelitish festivals. It was against such a Sabbath rigour that Jesus protests in this passage. In some British houses the children have the Sunday made miserable to them. They are hardly allowed to stir. If they laugh they are rudely checked, and the 'day of rest' becomes a day of unhappiness to them. On this particular day, as the disciples with the Master passed through the cornfields, they were hungry, and plucked a few ears to eat, as they were allowed to do by the Jewish Law.

2. On any other day the Pharisees would not have uttered any objection to their conduct. But on the Sabbath they were so rigid as to believe that it was wrong to do so much as to pluck a few ears of wheat and eat the grains contained in them. It may be noted, that the same privilege was granted by Jewish kindness to a man passing through a vineyard, to eat of the grapes if he were hungry, so long as he did not carry off any bunches in his bosom to eat when he was away.

3. Jesus, according to a frequent habit of his, answered them by one or rather two questions, leaving them to pass sentence upon themselves. To understand the full force of this and the following verse, we must remember that the Jews honoured David as the greatest of their kings. They called him 'A man after God's own heart.' From his stock they believed that their great deliverer or *Messiah* would come. When then Jesus chose his example to answer their objection against his disciples, they would have nothing to say in reply. Jesus asked them if they had never read 'what David

and his comrades did when they were hungry.' As soon as they heard this question, the Pharisees would know at once what was coming and what event in the life of David would be quoted against them.

4. David, when he was fleeing from Saul, went to Nob (I Samuel xxi. 1–6) to Ahimelech the high-priest, and entered the tabernacle of Jehovah, into which no layman could enter. There before the altar was the table with the shewbread, consisting of twelve loaves, one to represent each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Originally it was an offering to God of the fruits of agriculture. Of these twelve loaves nobody save the priests were permitted to eat. Yet Ahimelech the high-priest did not hesitate to give them to David with the sword of Goliath, whom he had slain in battle in his youth. The point of the argument is this. David broke the Law in his hour of need; yet David, as you admit, was 'a man after God's own heart.' Why should not my disciples break it in a far less important matter, when they are hungry, just because the day is the Sabbath? On another occasion Jesus illustrated the hypocrisy of the Pharisees by alleging that they would not shrink from pulling up a horse or an ass, which had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day.

5. The words 'Son of man' here do not in all probability apply to Jesus as 'the Messiah,' but are like the phrase in Ezekiel, which usually means simply 'man' in general. Man is lord of the Sabbath, said Jesus, therefore he must use it wisely. He must not desecrate it by unholy words or deeds. He ought to consecrate it by the worship of God. But he ought not to turn it into a day of misery by severe restrictions, which are Jewish rather than Christian. The Christian Sunday ought not to be like the older Scottish Sabbath, but a day of real rest and quiet gladness, different from other days in its occupations, but neither miserable nor sad.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The right use of the Sabbath. When we have a holiday, we spend it in a different way from our working days. So it is good and needful to make a difference between the Sunday and other days, though all days are alike in the sight of God and to be kept equally holy by service. We are bound to be just as good and kind from Monday morning to Saturday night as on the Sunday. Boys and girls should come to the school, and though the discipline therein is less severe than in the weekday school, they should consider it a point of honour to be good without being made to be orderly. They come thither to learn how to live. The teachers give up much of their precious time to help them. The boys and girls should remember that and listen as carefully and as quietly as they can. They should learn to worship God in the church or chapel, though they do not understand all that the worship means. Still if they sing the hymns heartily, they will do much. There are two places on earth more sacred than all others—the home and the church. In each of these boys and girls ought to learn to be thoughtful and kind and good. No one who is wise expects them to sit as quiet as mice in a cheese all the day on Sunday. But if they will only learn to do so in school and church, they will enjoy the noise outside with far greater zest.

In the old Scottish manses the children are kept rigidly quiet in the spare hours of the Sunday. This rigour often ends in positive hypocrisy. In William Black's ' Daughter of Heth ' a quaint yet truthful picture is presented. When the French girl Coquette came to live with the worthy minister she found Sunday a day of terror to her. The minister's children were compelled to read Whiston's translation of Josephus, who wrote the ' History of the Jews ' and the ' Jewish Antiquities.'

One of the boys said to his French cousin, ' Keep friends with the Whaup (the eldest son, so called because he was as wild as a curlew), and maybe he'll let you look into the fourth wollum.' The fourth volume of the learned book had had most of its pages cut out without disturbing their edges and turned into a cage for white mice. These the Whaup busied himself in feeding, while his father fondly imagined that he was dutifully reading the solemn book. So the good minister by spoiling their Sunday, made at least one of his children into a hypocrite.

There should be no such thing as a Sunday and week-day face. Still, the Sunday ought to be made distinct from other days in its occupations, so that the body and soul may be rested. The Pharisees would probably have refused to call in a doctor to cure a sick friend on their Sabbath. That would have been a piece of folly. It is as right to do good and necessary work on the Sabbath as on any other day. So the boys and girls should be joyous on the Sunday ; but they should torment no one with their joy, as they sometimes do, without thinking of how much pain they are giving. The mother is very tired after getting ready the Sunday dinner, which the family enjoys so much. The boys and the girls should think of her, and if she wants to take a nap after dinner they should not disturb her by making a noise in the house. Moreover, they should help her to clear the table ; they should come in at the proper meal-time and not keep her waiting. If they read a book, let it be a good book, whether a story or something else. They would do well to read one of the parables of Jesus ; though they must never be driven to the Bible, lest they take Bible-reading to be a punishment and learn to hate the Bible. Nor will they be doing wrong if they have a quiet game outside of the house—a quiet game, in which they do not spoil their clothes. The continental

Sunday with its noise and tumult is not a good one. It is too little restful. One of our most precious national assets is a quiet Sunday, which has been ours since the Reformation, though some are trying to spoil it to-day. We must take care not to make the children revolt against such a Sunday by making it a penance. Sunday ought to be a day of sunshine, which will prepare all for the rest of the days of the week. The country walk is a great help towards this end after school and church. Those who waste their Sundays in riot and indifference do not know what a source of strength, bodily and spiritual, they are throwing away. Let Sunday be the gladdest day of the week.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Gosse's 'Father and Son' will give many illustrations of the way of making life itself and Sunday with it unhappy by Puritan rigour.

2. See Mrs. Newcome's mode of life in Thackeray's 'Newcomes,' Chapter ii.

3. See the opening chapters of Miss Wetherell's 'Queechy.'

Lesson VIII

THE BLESSING OF THE POOR

Luke vi. 20–26

(20) And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *are* ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God. (21) Blessed *are* ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are* ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh. (22) Blessed *are* ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. (23) Rejoice in that day and leap *for joy*; for behold your reward is great in heaven: for in the same manner did their fathers unto the prophets. (24) But woe *unto you* that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. (25) Woe *unto you* that are full now! for ye shall hunger. Woe *unto you* that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. (26) Woe *unto you*, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets.

Point of the Lesson. To understand these verses we must remember that Jesus is blessing the poor and needy, who were so from no fault of their own, or for the sake of the gospel. He is condemning the rich, who were careless about their duties and who wasted their riches upon themselves. Of the former he says, that they will receive abundant consolation. Those who are rich and selfish, never feeling the obligation of their riches, have received their full reward. Sorrow will fall upon the idle laughers, and the praise of man is not the same with the approval of God. Boys and girls, be true, hopeful, faithful, and kind, and the blessing of God our Father will be yours.

20. In these verses Jesus seems to be speaking to his own disciples rather than to the crowd, as was the case in the 'Sermon on the Mount.' In this collection of the sayings of Jesus are many passages like those in Matthew v.–vii., though there are marked differences. For example, the 'poor in spirit' or 'humble-minded' of Matthew v. 3 has become simply 'ye poor,' as indeed his disciples were for the most part. The word 'blessed' means literally 'happy.' Here Jesus through his disciples speaks to the poor of the kind described above. To him the promise of 'the kingdom of God' meant the 'peace of God' given to all who try to do his will, which makes its possessor 'happy' on earth and prepares him for the other life. 'The kingdom of God' is the same with the 'kingdom of heaven' in Matthew v. 3. It means both the 'kingdom of God' after death, and the 'kingdom of God' which is within us, which may be ours on earth, if we are true to God our Father.

21. This verse speaks words of comfort to the 'hungry' and 'sorrowful,' that is, to those who are suffering from the oppression and trials of earth. If such, whether old or young, would take their troubles to God, he would give them happiness and peace.

22–23. These words were uttered to give strength and hope to those who were persecuted 'for the Messiah's sake,' that is, to those disciples who remained true to Jesus in good report and evil. It describes what happened almost immediately after his crucifixion. The Jews did hate the little Church, refusing to have anything to do with its members, and persecuting them as far off as Damascus. On his way thither Saul the persecuting Pharisee became Paul the Apostle and saint (Acts ix. 1–19). When the disciples in the future felt the pangs of persecution, they were to rejoice in their hearts, knowing that they were doing right and that blessing would follow their suffering on earth This great truth

the Christian martyrs of all ages have found to the full. They have gone to their death rejoicing and praying for their persecutors.

24. Jesus is speaking to those rich people of his own day, who thought that their riches were a special sign of God's favour. He speaks to those to-day who use their wealth simply to minister to their own pleasure, not to those who use it to help others. Such as trust in riches lean upon a broken reed. In the use of wealth is its blessing or its curse to its possessor. Those who use it as 'God's stewards' will win the blessing bestowed upon Zacchæus. Those who use it to minister to their own selfishness, will find it a curse instead of a blessing.

25. Jesus is speaking to those who are gluttons and niggards at the same time. He is also uttering a word of warning to thoughtless pleasure-seekers, who seek only to minister to their own pleasures. To them would come the spiritual hunger of unsatisfied souls, since 'man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God.' Those selfish pleasure-seekers will sooner or later feel the pangs of remorse for neglected opportunities of helping and blessing others. It may be noted in passing, that selfishness is not confined by any means to one class, but is hateful wherever it is found.

26. By these words Jesus expresses a stern condemnation of those who are sometimes called 'jolly good fellows,' who are not strong enough in the face of temptation to do right. That was what the false prophets of old time had done. They had spoken smooth speeches to those who paid them well to do so, but had never uttered a word against the sins of their time. He does not refer to those who win the love of their fellows by loving self-denial. Let boys and girls remember one sound rule of conduct. They have not to think of the praise of others, but to do their duty however

hard it may be. The path of duty is uphill; but the fresh breezes of the Spirit of God blow over it.

ILLUSTRATIONS

20. *The Poor.* Many boys and girls, no less than men and women, are apt to murmur, because they are poor. They think they would be much happier if they were rich. They might be, but only upon one condition. If they learn to cultivate the 'heavenly mind' of kindness, unselfishness, patience, and obedience, whether they be rich or poor, they will win something which money cannot buy. They will be able to go through life on earth happily and fit themselves for what lies hereafter. The 'happiest man,' in the old poem, whose shirt was needed to cure the king, had not even a shirt to his back.

21. *The Hungry.* The 'hunger' here meant is probably not simply bodily hunger, but 'hunger after righteousness.' If it means the first, the words are intended to comfort the hungry, in that they will be filled. Boys and girls ought to be filled with a hunger to do right. At work they should not be idle, but do their best, neither having 'a bone in their back' nor seeking 'a soft job.' Their work is God's work first, which must be done well for him. So too those who are sorrowful for their wrongdoing and shortcomings will receive the joy of forgiveness. Some who have done a wrong are too proud to acknowledge it, and to ask forgiveness. Such can never be happy. A boy once stole some of his father's wages, which had been laid on one side for the rent. He would not confess his sin. His father never found him out, but God saw him. Long years afterwards the boy, grown into an old man, told how he carried the pain of his unconfessed sin with him right down to the edge of the grave.

22-23. *Persecution.* No one, who is truly good and

honest, goes through life without some persecution. When a number of boys have agreed together to rob an orchard, and one refuses because it is wrong, the rest will try to torment him into consenting. If he refuses to join them, they will call him hard names. Yet that boy is actually happier in his right-doing than the rest in their wrongdoing. A girl may refuse to join her companions in using bad language, or in going screaming about the streets, as many of them do. They will call her names; but she will have the happiness God-given, which comes from doing right. Many have been severely persecuted in the past for their religion. In the great amphitheatre of Lyons, before the howling mob, a little band of Christians, including young women and mere children, stood in the midst praying, while the savage beasts were let loose upon them to tear them limb from limb. They were 'faithful unto death, and they received a crown of life.' Let boys and girls be true to themselves, learning how to endure petty persecution. This is the highway to happiness.

24. *The Rich.* Those who are rich and selfish do not know what happiness is any more than those who are poor and selfish. Many of them are anxious and restless, save when they are asleep. Such have received their full consolation in this life. They cannot have both the simply selfish possession of wealth and the peace of God. Selfishness is mortal foe to the peace of God. Wealth wisely and unselfishly used is a priceless possession both to those who so use it and those for whom it is so used.

25. *The Greedy.* Those boys and girls who have enough to eat and who care for little else, will be neither healthy nor happy. Vitellius, the Roman Emperor, is said to have spent £6,000,000 in less than a year in feasting with his flatterers. But his greediness did not save him from the assassin's knife. Those boys and girls, who carelessly seek their own pleasures alone, grow

up into selfish and unhappy men and women. They will surely repent over misspent days and lost opportunities, when it is too late.

26. *The Praise of Others.* Boys and girls must learn to do right, whatever other boys and girls may say of them. If they will not do this, though they have many companions who call them kind names, they will not be happy. They will always have the sense of wrong on their consciences, which will be keen and painful sometimes, however much they may try to blunt them. We have not to seek the praise of others, but to do our duty bravely, whatever comes, showing ourselves kind at all times, and we shall find our God breathing happiness into our souls.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. The story of 'John Pounds' in 'Memorable Unitarians.'
2. J. E. Brown's 'Elizabeth Fry.'
3. Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of Theophilus Lindsey.'
4. Any life of Napoleon Bonaparte, especially Channing's lecture on him.
5. Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of Theodore Parker.'

Lesson IX

GOOD AND EVIL FRUIT

Luke vi. 43–45

(43) For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit. (44) For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. (45) The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* bringeth forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Point of the Lesson. A bad character cannot bring forth good fruit, nor will a truly good character bring forth rotten fruit. Boys and girls have to learn to make and keep their characters good, just as the gardener trains and prunes his fruit-trees, taking care to keep each of them free from blight of any kind. The one supreme blight upon any character is selfishness, which takes away from it all grace and beauty. A good character is one of our best possessions; it must be made and trained during boyhood and girlhood.

43. The word used for 'good' in this verse means literally 'beautiful.' It was the word commonly used amongst the Greeks for 'honourable' as applied to character, that is, to a character which was beautiful in itself and beautiful to those who saw it from the outside. The word 'corrupt' is literally 'rotten.' If the tree be good and sound, it will yield good fruit;

it will not produce rotten fruit. Sometimes a tree from blight or from some other cause has its leaves shrivelled and its fruit poor and mean. Such is the fruit of a bad or selfish character. It shows itself in bad, unkind, and selfish words and deeds. These are the fruits of character. It is well then and needful to make and keep our characters as good as we can. If we will follow the instruction of Jesus and try to imitate him, praying to his God and ours to help us, we shall grow up into good characters, making mistakes no doubt, but struggling against our own weakness and sin with all our might. Then we shall be like good trees bearing good, sweet, and sound fruit.

44. 'A tree is known by its fruit.' Figs are not found on thorns nor grapes on bramble bushes. Possibly the 'thorns' and 'brambles' refer to those 'hedges of rough-leaved prickly pear, which surround so many fig-orchards and vineyards.' To one of these Jesus may have pointed, when he used his comparison. So he drives home the truth of the need of absolute sincerity and of a good character by a striking yet homely illustration. No boy or girl would expect to find ripe juicy apples on a thorn-hedge, or pears on the heather. Yet men think that they can deceive others by putting on a fair show, when they are in reality rascals. No one would go to a thief and expect to find a pattern of honesty. No one would expect truth from a confirmed liar. No one would expect gentle kindness from a brutal man or woman. Yet there are men, who are really dishonest, who try to show themselves off as honest. Boys and girls must learn to be what they seem to be. They must try to bring forth the sweet ripe fruits of kindly deeds and thoughts and words, which are the produce of a good character.

45. When a man has got many good and beautiful things in his treasure chamber and nothing else, he will

bring out good and beautiful things to all who ask him. He may have fine pictures, or good books, or other things no less good. So boys and girls must do their best to keep their hearts good, and good deeds and words will be the result. On the other hand, a man who has only ugly and injurious things in his treasure chamber, can only bring out these to displease and injure those about him. Boys and girls must remember to keep the treasure chamber of a good, pure, and unselfish heart. Then we shall not hear so many ugly, unkind, and impure words; we shall not see so many ugly and unkind actions. They must remember that 'the child is father of the man.' In other words, their childish faults will grow weaker with them, as they grow up into men and women. It is of the utmost importance to them to begin from the beginning, to keep their characters good, to learn the habit of self-denial, worship, of unfailing kindness, while they are yet young, so that they may grow up to be good, true, and loving men and women.

A pure heart shows itself in pure and kind words and deeds. Let boys and girls learn to be good while they are young, so that they may be good when they are old. We want them to make the best of life. This is the only way to achieve that end. Let them learn to love one another and thereby to love God, the loving Father of all, and their lives will be good and happy.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The True and Sincere Character. A certain man had a large orchard, which contained many fruit-trees, which he tended most carefully. He would prune the branches, do his utmost to keep the blossoms, so that they might knit into fruit, and above all else he would watch for the slightest appearance of blight. Blight is a subtle corruption, which shows itself in many ways. One of the worst in that orchard was the American blight,

which consists of a little insect, which wraps itself up in a sort of fluffy-looking white down. The man watched over his trees during spring, and whenever he saw the slightest trace of American blight, he would paint over the trunks and twigs with something to destroy it. This he was obliged to do when the blight was yet young. If once he neglected to see to it at the beginning of its growth, it would soon master him. One of his trees, which bore a choice kind of apple, got the blight, which he perceived too late. As the year wore on, the tree became covered with the fluffy white down containing the insect. The leaves shrivelled up and withered away, after first turning red. The blossoms for the most part, such as there were, fell off without knitting into fruit. When he came in the autumn to look for fruit he did not find one sound full-grown apple on his tree. There were a few withered, wizened, half-starved looking things, but nothing better. Such is a neglected character. If boys and girls do not try to cure their faults, each one of them, while they are young, they will live to regret their neglect. There is the bad habit, for instance, of being too late. That can be cured in boyhood and girlhood. It is not so easy to cure later in life. Let them begin at the beginning, remembering that there is nothing worse than a bad character. It stands in the way of all progress in life. A young man, for example, is a good and clever workman. But he has acquired the evil habit of heavy drinking. When some one who knows him well is asked for his character, and the question is put 'Is he steady?' what answer can be given? What chance has the young man of getting on in life and of doing useful work?

Once some children were playing amidst the ruins of an old abbey in North Wales, which stands in a beautiful spot near the great mountains and by the side of a clear stream. Their father was at a little distance watching

them very carefully to see that they got into no mischief. On one of the walls was growing a rare and beautiful plant. It was in the fall of the year and the plant was filled with fruit. Its berries were of a deep purple with a delicate bloom upon them, and looked good to eat. When the father saw some of these in the hands of his children, though usually very gentle with them, he tore the berries out and throwing them upon the ground he crushed them with his feet. His children looked on in astonishment to see him so unlike himself, and one of them puckering up his little face began to cry. Then he said, 'I am glad that I saw you with those berries in time If you had eaten them, you would have been poisoned. They are the berries of the Deadly Nightshade.' Then the little lad ceased crying, and with his brothers and sisters thanked their father for having saved their lives. That Deadly Nightshade could not produce any other fruit but its own poisonous berries. None could find plums or pears upon its pale green twigs. Yet its berries were so beautiful that they might easily have deceived those who knew nothing about them. So a bad character can produce little besides words and deeds which will poison the good in others who come under its evil influence, nor does it make any happy or at peace. If boys and girls want to be happy and at peace with everybody, with their God, and themselves, they must learn not to poison their characters by cultivating evil habits. They must try to be good and obedient, kind to one another, and ready to give up some of their most valued pleasures to give pleasure to one another. In Java there was once believed to be a tree so deadly that nothing could grow beneath its shade. It was known as the upas-tree. Selfishness is the upas-tree of life, which destroys goodness and kindness in the human heart. No one wants boys or girls to be little prigs. What we want them to see is this, that it is best for them from

the beginning to cultivate good habits, good thoughts, and good deeds. As they begin, so they often end. It is good and needful for them to begin well, to keep on well, that they may end well. They are God's children; let them try to be true children of God.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER

1. In Dickens's 'Nicholas Nickleby,' in Chapter i., is a description of Ralph Nickleby, when he was a boy at school, which clearly shows how his evil character was formed. That can be seen in the rest of the book.
2. In Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of Channing' may be seen how truly saintly character is formed.
3. Alfred Hall's 'James Martineau.'

Lesson X

THE LOWLINESS OF THE TRULY GREAT

Luke vii. 18–23

(18) And the disciples of John told him of all these things. (19) And John calling unto him certain two of his disciples sent them to the Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? (20) And when the men were come to him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? (21) In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. (22) And he answered and said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached unto them. (23) And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.

Point of the Lesson. The point of the lesson is the devout humility of Jesus, who left the Baptist to judge for himself, if he were the Messiah. He did many 'acts of power,' as they should be called rather than miracles, such as every great Teacher was expected to perform. Such things would seem to have been done to a certain extent by the Pharisees, of whom Jesus asked the question with reference to the casting out of demons, 'By whom do your sons cast them out?' We need not pause at this point to discuss the question of miracle. The meaning of the passage is perfectly clear. 'I have given you these signs of power; tell them to John and

let him judge for himself.' We can take this lesson of humility to ourselves and be less rash in our high opinions of ourselves.

18. John the Baptist was in prison in the castle of Machaerus for his plainness of speech to Herod Antipas. For a time his imprisonment was probably not severe, as he was allowed to have at least the occasional presence of his disciples. Some of these told him of the wondrous fame of the new Teacher.

19. Hence in his far-away imprisonment John was anxious to learn from Jesus himself, if he were the long-expected Messiah who would conquer the enemies of Israel and free him amongst the rest. John had no clear idea of the mission of Jesus, who at this time does not appear to have realized its fulness himself. Doubtless he expected, if he were the Messiah, that he would be a political leader no less than a religious reformer.

20. John's disciples were quite as anxious as their imprisoned teacher to learn what Jesus was. If he had told them that he was the Messiah, they would have left John and followed him. Till his last journey to Jerusalem Jesus seems to have been unwilling even for his disciples to confess that he was the Messiah (Mark viii. 30, 'And he charged them to tell no man of him'). Hence it seems clear, that his thought of his mission grew with his ministry. That is his attitude of mind as shown in the first three Gospels. In the Fourth Gospel we must remember that we have an idealized picture of the Master drawn long after his death, in accordance with a particular philosophical theory and colouring the events of his life with the thoughts suggested by his death.

21. Jesus is represented as working many acts of power in the healing of sicknesses, while he returned no answer at once to John's messengers. The 'evil spirits' were supposed to take possession of human bodies and

cause them various kinds of sickness. That Jesus shared in the belief of his time in this matter is probable. To-day we should call the diseases in question nervous ailments. Many of these were in all probability cured by his strong personality.

22. When he had finished, Jesus turned to the men, and bade them tell John what they had heard and seen, so that he would be able to judge for himself. Of the 'acts of power,' how far they were spiritual or actual we need not inquire. That does not affect the point of the answer of Jesus, which is made up of echoes of Old Testament prophecy. The most important words are those which end the verse. 'The poor have the good tidings preached to them'—that is of God's kingdom. That good tidings is preached to all of us, that we may be healed of our spiritual diseases or sins. John would probably take the 'good tidings' to refer to 'the good news of the beginning of the Messianic kingdom.'

23. Jesus added an important caution. His words imply that the plainness of his teaching would cause many who did not agree with him to stumble. He also may have had in mind his own thought of his spiritual Messiahship, the truth of which was gradually growing in his own mind. That was a Messiahship, which his people would not understand, as they expected a hero-king, who would be half warrior, half prophet. Hence they would be likely to stumble at the thought. Jesus says, 'Blessed is the man who understands me and my mission, and who does not turn away from me in anger.'

Additional Note. John's disciples would go back to their teacher filled with their wonderful experiences. They would be deeply impressed by the majesty of the personality of Jesus, no less than by his lowliness. They would wait in eagerness for the opinion of John. From the story we can learn the lesson of the lowliness of the holiest son of God ever born upon earth.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Lowliness of True Greatness. This story of the lowliness of Jesus may well teach boys and girls to be lowly too. Teachers not nearly so sublime as he have also had the grace of humility. In Athens there lived a very ugly man four centuries before the birth of Jesus. Remember that the Athenians could not believe that a beautiful mind could be lodged in an ugly body. But the mind of Socrates was one of the most beautiful in ancient days. When the priestess of the great temple of Apollo the sun-god in Delphi had sent him a message that 'Socrates was the wisest in all Greece,' he was much perplexed and greatly troubled. He felt himself not to deserve so high a title, and he began to go about Athens in the hope of finding wiser men. Even when he found none, he did not think himself 'the wisest man.' He found that those occupied in the various trades were clever in their trades, but imagined themselves to be clever in everything else. In this he differed from them. 'Knowing himself to be ignorant, he never once imagined himself to be wise.' One of the greatest women of our England was no less lowly-minded. Florence Nightingale studied hard to gain knowledge of sick-nursing. When the terrible Crimean War was raging, she offered to organize a staff to go with her to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers. She took her helpers with her and brought healing and comfort to many distressed men. Her presence in the hospital was like that of an angel of mercy and kindness. She revolutionized army hospitals, and on her return she did much to revolutionize the work of hospital nurses in the time of peace. Yet her mind was always lowly. She had felt God's call and obeyed it. All that she claimed was a certain aptitude for taking pains and arranging work in a business-like manner. Boys and girls should remember, that

the greatest are usually the lowliest-minded. Realizing how much is beyond their power, they are not given to vain boasting, but do their duty calmly and modestly, using their great gifts for the good of their brothers and sisters.

Boys and girls are often puffed up, because they have won a prize at school, or have distinguished themselves in the school-games. If they feel any such vanity let them go into some great library and see the multitudes of books, of whose very titles they have never heard, and they will learn how little they know at the best. In the Manchester Free Reference Library are at least 170,000 volumes, in the John Rylands Library are many more, while that in the British Museum contains far more than these taken together. If boys and girls go into one of these and think how much knowledge is to be found in the books on its shelves, they will learn to be humble about their own. Or better still let them go out upon a starry night and try to count the stars. There they will see worlds made and worlds in the making, many of them larger than our earth and distant millions upon millions of miles from us. Yet all are moving in perfect order by the will of that God who called them into being. Then they will learn to wonder in lowly awe at his infinite power and wisdom. Then will they realize how small are their own power and knowledge. Or again let them take a walk in the country with some very learned geologist, and listen while he is telling them something of his knowledge. They will soon find out how much more he knows than they do, than has even entered into their dreams. Yes, it is good for boys and girls to be lowly-minded and modest. They should remember how much remains unknown by them that many others know, how much remains unknown by the greatest men and women on earth.

Nor should they be vain of their good looks, but

thankful to God who has willed them to be good-looking. Still less should they be vain of their fine clothes. In *Vanity Fair* Sir Pitt Crawley the younger is described as showing himself to his clever sister-in-law in his Court-dress, when he was going to Court. He never dreamed that his thin legs did not suit knee-breeches, but thought in his heart 'he looked killing.' So perhaps he did, though not in the precise sense he himself imagined. He looked killingly comical, as his sister-in-law perceived, so that she caricatured him very cleverly with her pencil. It is good to be neatly and tastefully dressed. But to be vain either of good looks or fine clothes is after all but a poor kind of vanity.

Boys and girls should imitate the supreme Teacher and all truly great men and women in being lowly-minded. Then they will win an added grace to their knowledge and to their lives, and be 'exalted in the sight of God.'

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Sir Isaac Newton in 'Memorable Unitarians,' pp. 53–61.
2. Benjamin Franklin in the same book, pp. 159–163.
3. Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of Theophilus Lindsey.'

Lesson XI

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke vii. 24–30

(24) And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken in the wind? (25) But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. (26) But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. (27) This is he of whom it is written,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

(28) I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John; yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (29) And all the people when they heard, and the tax-gatherers, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. (30) But the Pharisees and teachers of the law rejected for themselves the counsel of God, not having been baptized of him.

Point of the Lesson. In this passage Jesus bears his testimony to the worth and message of John the Baptist. He points out his simplicity of life, his heroism and his nobility, saying too that he prepared the way for the preaching of the gospel. Yet great as he was, he was not so great as the humble disciples of Jesus who had learned from him the meaning of 'the kingdom of God,' or 'that pure and trustful mind in which the

Spirit of God dwells.' Such too had been taught by him the meaning of that divine sonship which was the birthright of mankind. We should imitate the strong faithfulness of John, while our souls are filled with the gentler spirit of Jesus.

24. Jesus wanted his hearers to realize if they had truly appreciated and been truly moved by the teaching of the Baptist. They had gone out into the wilderness along Jordan's bank expecting to see at least a prophet, if not the Messiah. It was in this deep Jordan valley, that many of the false Messiahs had gathered their followers to war against the Roman government, that several more were to do the like. Hence Jesus asked the crowds what they went out into the wilderness to see.

25. Then he put them a second question: 'Had they gone out to see a gorgeously dressed man, such as would be found in kings' courts?' He asked this question both ironically and as understanding what may have been the actual expectation of many of that curious multitude. They may have expected to see some great leader of the line of David ready to lead them to victory. The question is also ironical, as it implies the marked contrast between the real man and any such expectations.

26. Jesus continues his lesson by calling John 'much more than a prophet.' By this he means that John was no ordinary prophet-preacher of righteousness, but something of a greater kind. He was in fact the last of the line of Old Testament prophets, who pleaded for repentance in the face of 'the coming wrath of God.'

27. Jesus proceeds to apply the words of Malachi (iii. 1) to John. He quotes them not quite exactly, though they had no reference to John, just as we quote Scripture to-day to clinch our argument. No doubt Jesus used the words with a deeper meaning; in them he did fullest honour to John and made the people

perceive what a true prophet he had been. He was in effect the messenger who announced the coming of the Messiah.

28. At first sight this verse seems not a little difficult; but its difficulties vanish on a little thought. 'Of all men none in his province is greater than John. Yet those who have rejoiced in the purer message of God's kingdom and Fatherhood have greater opportunities of living to God, and if they are faithful live a fuller life than is possible without this faith.' The expression 'born of women' simply means 'human'; for example, it is used in Job, 'Man that is born of a woman.' We who can realize the true greatness of John, should recognize our greater opportunities. He was the last of the old, we are of the new hope. His ideal was rather moral righteousness; ours includes that but rests in the conviction that we are God's 'dear children.' The relation between John and Jesus may be compared to that between the wilderness prophet Elijah and the 'Second Isaiah.' Because we love and try to follow Jesus, we must not therefore reverence any the less the strong sincerity of John.

29. The mass of the people and the despised tax-gatherers, who had thrilled to the stern teaching of John, rejoiced to hear Jesus praise their teacher. They 'justified God,' that is 'they acknowledged the righteousness of God' in giving them such a teacher. They may not have quite understood Jesus, who had not at this time proclaimed his Messiahship, but whose mind was filled with the knowledge of his purpose and mission.

30. The Pharisees, or Jewish zealots, and the Rabbis or Teachers, who had listened to John somewhat impatiently, refusing to be baptized by him, since they thought that they needed no repentance, were hurt and angry.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Be strong like John, strong and loving like Jesus. Boys and girls should learn as soon as they can what are their privileges as Christians, that is, as followers of the Christ. This does not mean that they are to be self-satisfied little prigs, but strong and kind and obedient. When we think of John the Baptist reproving the powerful tetrarch Herod to his face and dying in prison because he was true to himself, we can admire his courage and imitate him so far. A little girl had set her heart on winning a certain prize at school. It was a prize for regular attendance. All in her class had kept up till nearly the end of the year, but during November each of them had missed one Sunday. She was left with just another competitor, and she herself missed just one half-day. But her absence by mistake was credited to the other girl, while she was marked as present. Her father had taken a great interest in her effort to win the prize. When she saw her name as the prize-winner, she went at once to the superintendent and told him that she had missed half a day, while her companion had never missed. It cost her some strength of mind to do her duty and lose the prize. But she was strong enough to be true to herself, and she won the love and respect of the whole school. When she tearfully told him what she had done, her father said to her, 'You have won a better prize by telling the truth than if you had gained the finest book in the world. I am very proud of my little daughter.' That girl was true to herself, and she had her reward. Boys and girls can try to be true to themselves in this way and they will be at peace with themselves. If that little girl had taken the prize which she had not won, she would never have been happy when she showed it to her friends.

To be a true follower of Jesus boys and girls must be kind and self-denying. If they will honestly try, they

will find that so far from being unhappy in doing this, they will be filled with quiet happiness. As Thackeray tells us in *Vanity Fair*, Cuff the dandy and cock of the school had not realized how mean it was to bully a little boy who had been sent on an errand to smuggle into school something which ought never to have been smuggled into any place. Cuff was beating the little boy with a wicket-stump on the hand, while William Dobbin, the despised grocer's son, was reading the *Arabian Nights* in a quiet corner of the play-ground. He heard the culprit moaning with pain, when he could bear it no longer, and started up with the exclamation, 'Leave off bullying the little boy, or I'll give you the worst thrashing you ever had in your life.' Dobbin had not been able to stand his corner, being the butt of the school. But his kind heart could not endure the thought of the little boy's suffering. So he faced the danger of a good beating in one of those school-fights, which are often so unjust and so ungenerous. He took the part of the oppressed, and so became the hero of the school. Had he listened and suffered that little boy to be beaten and bullied by a young tyrant, he would have been unkind. As it was, he showed true kindness and succeeded in beating the bully. I do not for a moment defend fighting at school. But a boy who can face the risk of a sound thrashing to save another from being bullied, has the seeds of a hero in him. If bigger boys and girls, instead of bullying smaller boys and girls, will stand up for them, caring for them and helping them, they will begin to cultivate that sympathy with the distressed, which is one part of Christian discipleship. They should remember too that it is braver to command their temper than to fly into a passion upon every provocation. They should not seek to take revenge. Let them ask themselves what good it will do them, and they will find that it is no better than imitating savage beasts. If they

can learn to pass over the wrongs that are done to them, they will learn one of the first lessons of the Christian life. Moreover, they will have nothing wherewith to reproach themselves; but they will grow in grace and brotherly love as they grow in years. That is the high privilege of a Christian life, which brings peace and joy unspeakable.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. For strength like that of John the Baptist see Gardiner's 'Oliver Cromwell.'

2. For strength and gentleness combined see 'Memorable Unitarians,' under 'Priestley,' pp. 116–128; 'Newton,' pp. 53–61; and 'Channing,' pp. 319–326.

Lesson XII

THE SOWER

Luke viii. 4–15

(4) And when a great multitude came together, and they of every city resorted unto him, he spake by a parable: (5) The sower went forth to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden under foot, and the birds of the heaven devoured it. (6) And other fell on the rock; and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture. (7) And other fell amidst the thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. (8) And other fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. As he said these things he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

(9) And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. (10) And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. (11) Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. (12) And those by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. (13) And those on the rock *are* they which, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. (14) And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection. (15) And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Point of the Lesson. Jesus sows the word of life—that is, the teaching and example by which we live noble lives.

We must try to hear and to obey his words, to imitate his life. Then the seed will fall into good ground and bring forth much fruit. Jesus here describes a field of a kind common enough in Palestine. The path, hard and trodden down, ran through it. In other places the flat rock came near to the surface, so that the seed, falling into a depth of soil of about an inch, soon came up and soon withered. Moreover, there were clumps of thorns, possibly of thistles, scattered over the field, which the farmer had not cleared away. Such seed as fell into these clumps was choked by their growth. The good ground filled the rest of the field, from which a good crop could be gathered. Let boys and girls keep a true, kind, and thoughtful heart, and they will be able to receive the good seed, which will ripen into good and useful lives.

4. It was the habit of Jesus, like most other teachers in the East, to use parables to express his meaning, just as we use illustrations. As has been said, a 'parable' means a 'comparison,' which usually took the form of a story told with the purpose of teaching some deep lesson.

5. 'The Sower.' By this Jesus means himself. The sower in the field scatters the seed broadcast. So he scattered his teaching everywhere—that is, amongst men and women of very different dispositions. 'The wayside' is the path lying through the field, which would be so hard that the seeds would scarcely even when trodden down stick in it, and the birds which followed the sower would dart down and pick up the exposed seeds.

6. 'The rock' means, as has been said, those parts of the field where the soil was thinly strewn over slabs of rock. The dew and heat of the rock would soon make the seed spring up. But it would have no depth of earth in which to fix its roots, which would wither away when they touched the stony surface heated by the sun.

7. 'The thorns' were most probably those clumps of thistles or of brushwood, which grew rapidly in the heat and in the rich soil of Palestine. They grow up so thickly, that no corn-seed could come to perfection which fell into their midst.

8. In good ground a single grain of wheat carefully treated can make nearly twelve hundred grains. It never makes less than an ear, which usually contains over fifty grains. Commonly it makes several ears, each containing fifty grains.

'He that hath ears.' This phrase of Jesus means, 'You have ears to listen with, use them and lay my words to heart.'

9–10. Often Jesus must have been saddened by the inability of his own chosen friends to understand his meaning. Here he tells them, 'I have taught you the deep things of the kingdom of God plainly. To others I must speak in parables.' To this he adds the compassionate words, for that is their sense, 'I fear they will not understand, but I have taught them in parables to help them to understand.' That is the meaning of these words, which are a modified quotation from Isaiah VI. 9–10. The words were doubtless said with a sigh like those other words, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.'

11. The 'word of God' means the teaching which God had given to Jesus to give to others.

12. 'The wayside hearts' belong to those upon whom the teaching made so little impression, that tempters are easily able to take it away and prevent them from obeying it. Jesus uses the language of his own time when a personal devil was a matter of common belief. He uses the word figuratively for the evil influences of evil men, which prevent people of this kind from finding and living the true life.

13. 'The rocky places' refer to those shallow-hearted

souls which are captivated by novel teaching, but which soon give way to the shock of temptation.

14. 'The thorny hearts' belong to those who hear the teaching, but who care more for riches and the passing pleasures of life, so that the effect of the teaching is marred, if not choked out of existence.

15. 'The good ground.' These are the single-hearted, earnest people who want to live holy lives. In them the teaching takes root and brings forth a rich harvest.

N.B.—Montgomery's hymn, 'Sow in the morn thy seed,' will be a helpful illustration of the sowing of a good life.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The True Heart. The moral of this parable is: Be attentive to those who teach you to be good and true. Jesus describes three kinds of more or less inattentive boys and girls. (1) There are those who are so careless when they are being taught, that stray thoughts of mischief fill their minds, and the teaching does them no good. We find such in the Day school and in the Sunday school. The slightest thing draws off their attention from their teacher. So they grow up ignorant alike of common knowledge and of the knowledge how to live. (2) There are those who are eager enough to listen to a thing so long as it is new. But their interest soon fades, and the teaching ceases to have any effect upon their lives. They are shallow, and their lives are for the most part a failure. (3) There are those who are in the midst of temptations, who yield to them. So the temptations, like the thorns in the parable, choke out the effect of the teaching. (4) There are those who really want to learn as much as they can, and to learn how to live. These listen to the teacher and lay the teaching to heart, so that it grows with them and becomes fruitful in their lives.

In a certain part of America long ago there was a great scarcity of corn. Famine threatened the people with positive starvation. One village escaped this terrible menace by the wise forethought of the schoolmaster. He had a little sack of seed-corn in his house. Taking each of his scholars to him he gave to each a good handful of seed. 'Follow my directions,' he said, 'and you will have enough corn for the year.' He showed them how to get the ground ready and to sow the seeds singly and not too close together. When the seeds sprang up and turned into little plants, each was found to be divided into several smaller plants. The schoolmaster told his scholars to transplant these carefully. Each of the transplanted plants brought forth at least six ears of wheat; so that there was plenty of good corn in that village. Each seed made at least six plants, each of which in its turn made at least six ears, each of which produced thirty grains of wheat. So the one seed sown into good ground and carefully tended made at least one thousand and eighty grains. That is the way with attentive boys and girls. Each seed of knowledge sown into their minds makes many more seeds. Each seed of goodness sown into their hearts brings forth a multitude of seeds. But to win these results boys and girls must be really willing to learn. There is no time like early youth for this.

Nearly three centuries ago there was a poor scullion at a great college. Many therein were wasting their time and learning nothing. He had to work hard, washing dishes, blacking boots, and tidying rooms. But he strove hard to improve himself. Once one of the tutors of the college overheard him repeating Latin words. When he was asked where he had learned them, he said that he had caught them when he was outside of the lecture-room door, and resolved to learn them. He had got some old books, which some idle youths had

thrown away, and studied them until he understood them. Then the tutor was touched, and took him in hand. He passed his degree with great credit, he became a Fellow, and afterwards head of his college. Had he been careless like others, he might never have been anything but a scullion, earning small wages and winning little true pleasure in life. In like manner, in learning to be good, we must take from others what they can teach us and learn from the lives of the good. We must think of the teaching of Jesus and make it part of our daily lives by practice. Then shall we live fruitful lives, such as will bring great gain to others and peace and contentment to ourselves.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Florence Gregg's 'Story of Bishop Colenso,' for one who trained his own heart and mind and sowed good seed amongst the Zulus.

2. 'Memorable Unitarians,' see 'John Pounds,' pp. 286–289, and 'John Biddle,' pp. 28–36, for one who took good seed into his soul and sowed it in the souls of others.

Lesson XIII

THE CHRIST

Luke ix. 18–22

(18) And it came to pass, as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him : and he asked them, saying, Who do the multitude say that I am ? (19) And they answering said, John the Baptist ; but others *say*, Elijah ; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again. (20) And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am ? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God (21) But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no man ; (22) saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be subjected to the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

Point of the Lesson. The 'Christ' means the 'anointed one.' The Jews expected a hero-king, half saint, half warrior, who would redeem them from subjection to the Romans, who would restore their religion, making Jerusalem the centre of a world-kingdom. They called him in their own tongue the 'Messiah,' which in the Greek language is the 'Christ.' It must always be remembered that Christ is not a proper name, but a title like 'His Majesty,' as we style our King. Jesus was the Christ, in that he taught a new religion to the world, and showed all how to live as children of God. Boys and girls can make him the Christ to themselves by trying to live a noble life as he did.

18. Mark more faithfully represents this scene in the life of Jesus as occurring on his last journey to

Jerusalem. The order of events in Luke's Gospel-story is not always right. He wrote a long time after the death of Jesus, and made up his work out of several others, which were in existence in his day. He included in it all of Mark's narrative. Hence he who was a convert of Paul and a Greek, who had never seen or known Jesus, is not always accurate in the order of his story. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, and he longed to know if his disciples had understood him as the founder of a new religion, drawn in part from the Jewish religion, but higher and holier. In other words, he longed to know, if they understood him to be the true Christ, or the 'one who showed his people how to save themselves from their sins.'

19. When he asked them the people's opinion of him, their answers were various. Some said that he was 'John the Baptist risen from the dead,' as Herod Antipas seems at one time to have thought. This of course he could not be, since some time ago he had been baptized by John. Others said 'Elijah.' The Jews had a belief that Elijah, when he left earth, had not died, but was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. Thence, they believed, he would come to prepare the way for the advent of the Messiah. This story of Elijah was a legend, but it was firmly believed by most of the Jews in the time of Jesus. Another said that he was 'one of the old prophet-preachers,' who had called their people many times to repentance in the past. Such men were Amos and Isaiah. These were the thoughts of the people in general about Jesus.

20. Then Jesus turned more especially to his own disciples, whom he had chosen to take up his work when he had gone from earth, and asked them pointedly, 'What do you, my intimate friends, think of me?' Peter, always the first in the little company, answered for all of them, 'The Christ of God.' No doubt Peter

expected that Jesus would lead them to victory in battle, and did not yet understand that the mission of Jesus was religious not political. He expected to take his share in the new government, which he expected Jesus to establish in Jerusalem. 'God's Messiah' means the 'Messiah inspired by God' to show men and women how to live, in other words, how to get rid of their sins, to lead and teach all of them and us to be good and loving.

21–22. When he had received this answer, Jesus told his disciples to say nothing about his office. He felt that the ideas of his people and their leaders about their Messiah were very different from his. They expected a mighty warrior, he was a 'Prince of peace.' They looked forward to one who would establish a great kingdom in Jerusalem. He knew that his mission was to help his people, and through them all mankind, to live as children of God, to lead loving lives, each caring for the other. His kingdom was to be over human hearts. Such a spiritual kingdom he knew to be quite opposed to the expectations of his people, who would kill him when they knew how strongly he was in conflict with their leaders. Hence he told his disciples to say nothing about his Messiahship, but to let his people find it out for themselves, when they heard him in Jerusalem. 'Son of man.' These words, with 'Son of God,' were common Jewish titles for the Messiah. The first means '*the* man' in all probability; the second means not God, but 'Godlike man.' The first implies that the Messiah would be human, of the house of David, as the Jews believed; the second means that he would be especially inspired and endowed by God to lead his people to victory and to establish a kingdom half religious, half political.

Like other martyrs, Jesus foresaw that his teaching would arouse against him the enmity of the chiefs of his

nation in Jerusalem, which was certain to end in his death. Hence he warned his disciples what that end would be. He also told them that he would 'rise from the dead' to be borne into heaven.

ILLUSTRATIONS

How Jesus may be the Christ to us. Jesus is the Christ to all boys and girls, when they try to do what he tells them and to live as he lived. He lived a perfect life, not perfect in knowledge, but perfect in spirit. Boys and girls can only live their best, when they try to imitate him. For example, he said, 'Do as you would be done by,' to put his words into homely English. When one boy calls another a 'fool,' or is unkind to him, he is neither saying nor doing what he would like that other boy to say or do to him. He is not living quite as good a life, as he might have done, if he were less selfish. When a girl is rude to her mother, or a bully to smaller girls, she is not doing what she would like others to do to her. She is less good and kind than she might have been. When we are unforgiving, we are showing a feeling which we resent when others show it to us. That is the true test of conduct, which may be put in this way, 'How should I like another to treat me, as I am treating him?' It is a searching question, which all Christians ought to ask themselves, whether they be young or old. A homely proverb says, 'Put yourself in his place,' which Charles Reade has used as the title of a striking story. That is a good and true proverb, which boys and girls would do well to remember, when they are on the point of doing or saying something unkind to another. When one girl says to another, 'I will never speak to you again,' she is saying what she ought not to say and what she would not like another to have said to her. When a boy says, 'I will never forgive you,' he is saying what he has no right to say, and what he would not like to have said

to him. He may say the Lord's Prayer several times every Sunday and during the week, yet he forgets the words, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' If we expect to be forgiven, we must try to forgive. We have always to think of the feelings of others and to do our best not to wound them needlessly. When we are playing together, we should take care not to hurt anyone on purpose. Accidents happen sometimes. We have to take care that we do not wilfully kick another at football, for instance, to wreak our spite. That is a thoroughly mean action. When a football player does it in a great match, the referee very properly orders him off the ground and sometimes forbids him to play for several weeks. In like manner, when the crowd does not like the decision of the umpire, it does very wrong to try to injure him for doing his plain duty. He has done his best to be fair; why should they do their best to be brutally unfair? What is true of games is true of life. Some men try to get on by telling false tales of one who may be a little above them. Boys and girls must not imitate such men, who so far from being disciples of Jesus, are guilty of a mean and cunning action. They can make Jesus the 'Christ,' or teacher and friend to them, by trying to be good and loving, as he was good and loving, by refusing to do anything unkind or unfair, by speaking kindly and thoughtful words, and being ready to help others. They will not be able to do this all at once, any more than they can learn to read or write all at once. But they can begin at the beginning, and they will find the task grow easier every day. As in reading and writing they learn from their teachers how to do both, so they can learn from Jesus how to live. Let them never be afraid of being thought soft. It is better to have a soft heart than a soft head. Many of the greatest men and women have been also the kindest. Sir Isaac Newton was never angry with any-

one. He did not even punish his little dog, when it upset the candle and destroyed many valuable papers. He knew that he had been to blame himself for leaving the dog alone in the room. Martin Luther, who was strong enough to face death more than once, was kind to children and to the weak. So boys and girls can grow up to be true disciples of Jesus by learning his teaching and by imitating his life. He was called to suffer a horrible death, they are called to live noble lives. If they make him the Christ by obeying and imitating him, they will learn how to live truly and lovingly.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Any life of David Livingstone.
2. 'Memorable Unitarians' under 'John Biddle,' pp. 28–36. 'John Pounds,' pp. 286–289. 'William Rathbone,' pp. 400–404. These men followed Jesus in heart and life, and their memory is blessed for ever.

Lesson XIV

SELF-DENIAL

Luke ix. 23–25

(23) And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. (24) For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. (25) For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?

Point of the Lesson. Self-denial is one essential of discipleship to Jesus. He set us the example in this both by his life and by his death. He has left more than one parable, which enforces this great lesson. The words, which he uses here, are addressed to all who heard him speak, and are strong and direct. He shows us how we lose our higher and better self by being selfish and thoughtless toward others. Boys and girls should begin at the beginning and think of other boys and girls. They should never lose an opportunity of helping these, even if they have to give up something, which they like very much. But they will find that the sacrifice is always worth the making. They will feel so happy, when once it has been made.

23. Probably many of the crowd thought that they would like to be disciples of Jesus. It seemed so delightful to be with him, to hear him speak, to share his intimacy. He warned them, that to be true disciples was no easy task. To 'deny oneself' means to give

up something which is very precious to us, that we may help others. To 'take up the cross daily' means to be ready to bear bravely the little annoyances and the greater sorrows of life. In the time of Jesus those who were condemned to be crucified were compelled to carry their cross to the place where it would be set up, when they were to be fastened to it. Many boys and girls are very impatient, when they are called to bear any pain or disappointment. Jesus bids them to be brave and patient. They will not make their troubles any the easier by murmuring at them. Even if their troubles seem to them so great as the bearing of the cross seemed to those who had to do it, it is their duty as it will be their blessing to bear them with a strong heart. They will need to ask God our Father to help them, and he will hear their cry.

24. This verse seems to contain a contradiction, which is not really so. What Jesus means is this. We are called to give up much that we care for, if we wish to be true disciples of him and true to ourselves. To lose our life means something more than to give it up as the martyrs of all ages have done. It does mean that no doubt, but it means more. Boys and girls will not in all likelihood be called upon to die for their religion. But they will each one of them be called to live for it. That is sometimes a harder task than to die for it. If we want to make the best of ourselves, we have to learn the great lesson of giving up much of our own will for others. That is, we are called to conquer our own selfish wishes and inclinations, to make life easier and happier for our brothers and sisters. Every time that we conquer ourselves in this manner, we grow stronger and better. When a boy is learning to play a game, he has to conquer himself, if he is to learn it thoroughly. He has to be patient, he has to keep his temper, he has to be careful about his food. All these things are pieces of

self-conquest to gain an end. So in daily life, there are many opportunities of giving up something to give happiness to another. To use them needs much strength. If once we can lose thought of self in the desire to make the best of our lives in usefulness to others, we shall find the full glory of our lives. Selfishness is the mother of wrongdoing, of the neglect of duty. Selfishness deadens all that is best in us and prevents us from knowing and loving our God in a great measure. To be disciples of Jesus we must learn the great lesson of unselfishness and we shall find God's blessing in our hearts and our lives.

25. If we lose ourselves in selfish care for ourselves, we shall not know what true peace of mind is. Boys and girls often think that supreme happiness is to be found, when they always get their own way. That is by no means true. Their own way is so often quite wrong, and no one wins happiness from doing wrong. A man might perhaps have possession of all the world and yet live a poor starved life. Sometimes we read of misers, who have all but starved themselves to death and yet have had great heaps of hoarded money. Such people do not know what a happy life means. They have a kind of mean pleasure in having so much money. They seldom have the abiding pleasure of doing anyone a good turn. Great as Buonaparte was, he could never be said to be really happy. At one time he was the military dictator to Europe. But his ambition was in the main selfish. He gained much of the world, he lost his own higher and better self. When he was a lonely exile on the island of St. Helena, we can imagine what his thoughts would be and how he raged against his confinement. So boys and girls, whose only desire is to gratify their own wishes and to seek their own ends, can never know what real life is. Whatever they gain for themselves, they cannot buy happiness, no, nor

health, so long as they use it for themselves. They then should live with one aim clearly before them, to lead useful and unselfish lives. They should cultivate all their faculties to help them in this great purpose. If they do this patiently and persistently, they will find their lives filled with the known and acknowledged presence of the Father of all.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Learn to be unselfish. It is not easy for a boy to give up something which is very dear to him, to help another. A boy does not like to give up a good noisy game to sit up with a sick friend. Yet let him try to make the sacrifice, and he will find that he will go to bed a happier boy than if he had played the game to the end. A girl does not like to give up going out to a party of pleasure, so that another can go in her stead. Yet if she will make the sacrifice, she will be happier than if she had gone. Whenever we beat down selfishness, we win great happiness. Moreover, we do what is right. Jesus led a life of unselfish service and laid down his life unselfishly for the truth, which he was called to teach. In that as in all else he is our pattern. When the 'Birkenhead' was sinking in sight of the shore, it was only possible to save the women and children. When the last boat put off to the shore bearing its precious freight, the sailors, who in a few moments would be in eternity, sent up a ringing cheer, which was heard in heaven. They gave up their lives to save those helpless ones.

There are heroes on the sea, there are also heroes on the land. To those who do not know their warm hearts coal-miners seem rough alike in speech and conduct. But let there be an accident in one of the mines and instantly there is a large number of willing helpers. They know that the choke-damp follows most explosions,

which is fatal to those who breathe it into their lungs. But they do not think of that. Their comrades are down the mine ; they may be still alive ; they will save them, if they can. That is a commonplace fact in the story of coal-mining. The colliers are eager to go into danger and to possible death for the sake of their friends and companions. They know what self-denial in its strongest form means and they act upon the truth of those words of Jesus, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend.' Well do these brave and true men deserve the special distinction which our late King Edward was thoughtful enough to bestow upon them.

In a certain town some time ago there was a great scarcity of work so that many of the children had barely enough to eat and some were almost starving. One family in the town was large and only the father and the eldest boy were earning wages. They were the only bread-winners. They had not too much work, nor did they earn too much money for so many mouths. They were proud people and would neither run up a shop-score nor take relief from any. The boy always saw that his brothers and sisters had enough, before he ate his own meals. Often enough he left off hungry ; but he had the priceless pleasure of serving others. Once when he had earned a little more money than usual and his mother had given him a shilling to spend upon himself, he bought a stock of food of the sort which he liked very much. As he was bringing it home to eat it with full enjoyment, he saw a little lad crying as if his heart would break. He was touched and went up to him, asking what was the matter. 'I'm so hungry,' was the answer, 'and mammy says there is nothing in the house.' The boy asked anxiously, 'Where do you live ?' The child took him down a dark street and into a blind alley leading out of it. He opened a door, and the boy saw a

dismal room with no fire and scarcely any furniture. Most of that had been sold. He saw how thin the woman and her children looked and his heart was deeply moved. Then he laid down his parcel of food upon the table, and without saying a word ran off as fast as he could to avoid being thanked. So he sacrificed his own pleasure and some needful food to help others, who were worse off than he was. Truly the thankful prayers of that family would arise for him to the throne of God.

In the Crimean War a doctor was bravely doing his duty and binding up the wounded in the face of a hail of bullets. One of them struck him, mortally wounding him. 'Never mind me,' he said, 'I am done for. Look to the others.' That heroic man continued binding up the wounds of those who needed his care, till his life left him.

Here are examples for boys and girls. Let them try to give up something for the help of others. Let them in this matter not count the cost, and they will find their lives growing in happiness from day to day.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. One of the best illustrations of self-denial is Bret Harte's poem 'Flynn of Virginia.' Similarly two good poems are G. R. Sims's 'Women of Mumbles Head' and 'The Fireman's Wedding.'

2. Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of Dorothea Lynde Dix' and J. E. Brown's 'George Smith of Coalville.'

Lesson XV

AS A LITTLE CHILD

Luke ix. 46–48

(46) And there arose a reasoning amongst them, which of them should be greatest. (47) But when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart, he took a little child, and set him by his side, (48) and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is lesser amongst you all, the same is great.

Point of the Lesson. This lesson teaches modesty. We must not think ourselves greater than some one else. Like all of the most truly great, we must learn to keep the child's heart and the child's trustfulness. Remember always, it is the 'little child' in its entire dependence upon its father and mother, which points the lesson of our dependence upon our Father. The disciples of Jesus did not understand the meaning of his message, so long as he was with them. They were filled with dreams of a great Messianic kingdom in Jerusalem, in which each of them would have some important post. Hence they were often in hot dispute with one another, as to which of them should have the chief post. They did not know then, that they would have to undergo much suffering as preachers of the religion of Jesus. They did learn in the grim school of persecution, that he who rendered most service humbly and faithfully was truly great in the kingdom of God.

46. This was one of the frequent occasions on which the disciples filled their leisure in hot dispute. Each one of them wanted to be greatest in the coming kingdom. By 'greatest' greatness in intellect is not meant, but greatness in position. Each wanted to stand nearest Jesus in that great worldly kingdom, which they expected him to establish. None would give way for the other, since each thought himself better or dearer than the other. So their dreams of earthly wealth and power misled them. They little thought then, that the cross on Calvary awaited their teacher and friend.

47. No doubt Jesus would be deeply pained by the misunderstanding of his friends, no less than by their selfish disputing. But his reproof was as tender as it was true. Playing about in all its fresh young innocence was a little child. Jesus called the little one to him, put his arm around it, and kept it by his side for a few moments. Doubtless the child wondered what he was going to do with it, but it trusted Jesus with that unfailing instinct of children for those who love them. When his disciples saw him doing this, they in their turn would wonder at him. They saw nothing in the little one, but a commonplace child of whom there were thousands in the land. Jesus saw the wonderful possibilities in the little child. He saw too at his side a loving and lowly little being, who trusted him and came to him gladly.

48. Then followed the words of kindness and truth, blended with a note of warning. We may paraphrase them thus: 'You see this little child; to me it is the type of the true character. You may not trouble to call it to you, you may even despise it. Yet whatever you think of it, you must be such to be true disciples. Whoever takes such a child to train it to follow me, takes my spirit into his spirit, and so learns to know the Spirit of him who sent me and gave it to me. Why do

you quarrel, as to which of you shall be the greatest? Learn a lesson from the lowliness of this child. He who humbles himself and thinks more of the well-being of others than of his own, is truly great.' The lesson was given to the disciples of Jesus, but it is true for all time Boys and girls need to learn it from the beginning. They are apt to be filled with conceit, if they get on well at school, or say a recitation or sing a song well. That is quite wrong. Those who are cleverer than others should not be lifted up by their cleverness: that was given to them at their birth. They should rather think of those who are cleverer than themselves, and use their gifts to help others. A poppy is a showier flower than a violet. But think of the sweet fragrance breathed forth by a violet. Such is the sweetness of a lowly, unaffected, and single-hearted life. It is just this great virtue of simplicity and modesty, which boys and girls would do well to cultivate. They should never despise those who are endowed with these gifts, but love and help them. The spirit of a little child is the spirit of the greatest man or woman. These know how small their own greatness and knowledge are compared with the infinite God of the universe. They use their great gifts modestly and faithfully, and so do much service to their brothers and sisters. In their lives is an example for all boys and girls. These are called to use their gifts to the full to help and bless those who are around them. Then they will have learned how to live most truly and happily.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The little child. Many boys and girls are anxious to be thought clever and to get into the best places, without for a moment considering whether they are fit for them. They push themselves to the front without realizing that modesty is nobler and better. If they do not get the places, which they are confident that they deserve, they

are morose and quarrelsome and dissatisfied. They will push others out of the way, to take their places at the front. That is neither wise nor right. Let them think of some of the greatest men who have lived on earth. In India nearly five centuries before the birth of Christ a prince was born in a gorgeous palace, and heir to a great kingdom. When he grew up, he would have the power of life and death over his subjects and be able to lead a life of great luxury and selfish ease. He was known as Siddartha, and carefully nourished and educated, while every sight of suffering was as far as possible kept from him. He only saw the rich nobles of the Court, whose lives must have seemed to him to be as happy as the day was long. He had no sickness, and he had never seen anyone worn away by disease. Very foolishly his father and mother tried to make him think that the whole of life was pleasant and without trouble of any kind. He had the best food, the finest clothes, and every pleasure which his father's wealth and power could command.

But their care was in vain in the end. One day the young prince was driving along in state in a solemn procession. A great train of magnificently dressed noblemen rode behind and before him. All the old and decrepit people had been ordered to keep within doors, while Siddartha was passing along the streets. At first all whom he saw were well dressed and looked healthy and happy. But suddenly in the midst of the splendour appeared a poor, sick, old, and deformed man, who begged piteously from the young prince. Siddartha looked at him attentively for a moment or two, and seeing something human in him, yet unlike anything which he had seen before, he said to his tutor, 'Is that thing a man?' The answer came back to him, 'Yes, my lord, he is a man.' Overwhelmed with surprise and pity, Siddartha went on, 'Are there many such in my kingdom?' His

tutor replied, ' Yea, my lord, there are tens of thousands such, and some in a worse plight.' Then the young prince pondered over what he had heard. He was rudely awaked from his pleasant dream that life was all happiness and ease. The more he thought of human misery, the more determined he was to do something to help his wretched brothers and sisters. He gave up all thought of succeeding to his father's kingdom after his father's death. He humbled himself so far as to leave the gorgeous palace with all its delights behind him. He fled from his royal home secretly and by night, that he might go about his kingdom helping the poor and wretched to endure their lives more bravely. He spent much time in solitude to prepare himself for the great work which God had given him to do. Then he went forth to teach men and women a noble way of life. He succeeded in planting a great and noble religion, being as lowly-minded as he was wise and loving. Now millions are cheered and helped to live by the truths which he taught so long ago. This young prince was Gautama the Buddha, who chose rather to suffer pain, hardship, poverty, hunger, and thirst in the hope of helping his brothers and sisters than to reign over many of them in selfish prosperity. He chose to be least amongst the great ones of his land, and he has become one of the greatest of the sons of men. Through all of his life he kept the heart of a little child. He was pure, loving, unselfish, trustful, and he has left his example behind for others to follow.

In our own England Alfred the Great was lowly-minded. It is true that he remained king of England; but he was ever ready to learn from anyone who could teach him anything. Assher, who wrote his life, helped him to educate himself and his people. Alfred was never vain: he was always simple, natural, and childlike. He kept one aim always before his mind: he wanted to ' live

worthily,' and he succeeded better than most others in so doing. He went about his work with a modesty most uncommon in kings and not too common amongst men of a less exalted station; nor did he ever seek to win credit for what he did.

From these two great men boys and girls can learn to be lowly-minded and childlike in heart, while they gain as much wisdom as they can. This they can use to help others to live, and they will live true lives, brightened by the blessing of God our Father.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of St. Francis of Assisi.'
2. Longfellow's 'King Robert of Sicily' in his 'Tales of a Wayside Inn.'
3. The character of 'George Arthur' in 'Tom Brown's School days.'

Lesson XVI

TOLERANCE

Luke ix. 49–50

(49) And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. (50) But Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against you is for you.

Point of the Lesson. This is a short lesson of only two verses, but it is one of great importance. It teaches us to be ready to work with others, though they may think differently from ourselves. So long as the purpose is one and quite sincere, we must learn to know that there are many ways leading to it, as there are many ways to London. Almost from its beginning the Christian Church has not understood this side of its founder's teaching. One sect has persecuted another; one individual has threatened another with the pains of hell, simply because they did not see eye to eye. So Catholics have burned Protestants and Protestants have persecuted Catholics because of their religious beliefs. Jesus taught us to respect the convictions of others, while we cling to our own. Moreover, he taught us not to hinder others from doing good and needful work, simply because they do not belong to our way of thinking.

49. 'Casting out demons.' In the time of Jesus and for long afterwards were many people suffering from

epilepsy and various forms of nervous diseases. These the people of their own day believed to be possessed of evil spirits. To cure such was, according to the belief of the time, to 'cast out demons.' So late as the early sixteenth century Andrew Boorde tells of how in Italy he saw a woman, whom to-day we should have known to be mad, but whom he and others supposed to be possessed with a devil. She was most cruelly treated to get it out of her, of course without success. We no longer hold such a belief, but set down all diseases as far as we can to their proper causes in the body or the brain. Luke does not tell us when John, one of 'the Sons of thunder,' told Jesus of the harshness of his disciples to one who was working cures in his name. John did not realize that the man was a disciple, in fact, though he had not joined the little company. He may easily have been too modest to thrust himself upon Jesus. But 'the Son of thunder,' in jealousy of him, at once forbade him to do any such thing. Doubtless he thought that he was doing a noble thing in shutting up the bold stranger. But neither he nor his fellow-disciples understood the loving heart of Jesus, which beat warmly towards all who tried to act in his name and to learn of him from a distance. They were jealous of their prerogatives as chosen friends of Jesus; they would have none to act in his name, who did not follow with them. Jesus would fain have had all mankind act as he did, since he knew all to be his brothers.

50. Notice the gentleness of the answer. Jesus did not rebuke his headstrong disciple in a set form. He only said, 'Do not forbid him. In that he is not opposing us, he is actually helping us.' He recognized in the man a disciple who was trying to do his work and who was cheered by the thought that he was doing it in the name of Jesus. Such a one could not be an enemy, he must needs be a friend. No doubt John would be surprised

by the answer of Jesus. He had expected to be commended for his unkind action, thinking that he was doing right in checking a presumptuous stranger. Instead, though none but gentle words were addressed to him, he could not have failed to feel the implied rebuke. The thought of Jesus was wider than that of his disciples. They thought of themselves with pride as his intimate friends, outside of whose circle no one had the right to think or act or speak in their Master's name. Jesus was only anxious to bring his message of life and peace home to all, not to those who actually followed him only. The lesson is needed still by all sections of the Christian Church, though these are working better together to-day than at any time in the past. So too it often happens that boys and girls may think that a boy or girl may be doing something against them, when the very opposite is the case. Never think that a boy or a girl is not working for the same end as you are, because the one or the other may be going to a different Sunday school. The object of all Sunday schools is to teach the boys and girls to be true children of God. They come to school to learn how to make and keep their characters good. It is not what they believe, so much as what they do, which will help them to this great object in life. Many ways lead to it. If others like their own path best, do not condemn them, but work with them in your own way, so far as they will let you. That is what true tolerance means. It is not merely putting up with some one else, because the law demands it of you. It means clinging to your own convictions, but always respecting those of others. We cannot afford to quarrel about shadows, when the substance is slipping away from us. We must realize that every other has just as much right to his own opinion, as we have ourselves. Nor must we scorn another, because some of his opinions appear foolish to us. We are all disciples of Jesus. Let us remember

his answer to the intolerant John and follow it out in our daily life.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Work with one another in spite of differences of opinion. At school there will often be one boy or girl, who may not be popular with the rest, who thinks and acts differently from the rest. Frequently this happens, because the rest will not try to take the trouble to understand the one or the other. The boy may take upon himself to do something which the others do not like, or he may do something which they do not understand. They at once try to hinder him from doing it. If they had first tried to understand what he meant and why he did it, they might have spared him and themselves much pain. Hans Christian Andersen tells of an 'ugly duckling' appearing in a poultry-yard. Each of the fowls began to abuse it. The ducks were no less unkind to it. It seemed to be different from any of their chickens or ducklings. So they tried to persecute it, and called it ugly over and over again. But time flew along and in a little time the ugly duckling, which swam beautifully, grew and grew, until it became a noble swan. Like the inhabitants of that poultry-yard, boys and girls often misunderstand some one and will barely tolerate his presence amongst them. Yet that scorned boy may have it in him to become far superior to those who persecuted him. We ought to try to work together with others, whose opinions seem strange to us. We ought to find out what they mean and what they are trying to do. We ought always to respect their opinions and use their help as far as we can.

John Calvin was one of the greatest theologians of the world. But he has one indelible stain upon his character. When Michael Servetus the Unitarian was in his power, he might have saved him from being burned

alive for his religious opinions. But he held his hand and allowed the Spanish physician to suffer the most horrible of deaths, because he chose to worship God in his own way. So he was like John the 'Son of thunder,' though he allowed his prejudice to carry him further and he completely forgot the words of Jesus, which were said to that fiery disciple. Oliver Cromwell, who was a follower of John Calvin, had nevertheless a broader and more Christian view of such matters. When he became Protector of this country he showed himself far more tolerant than most of the men of his day. When he was making up his army of Ironsides, he resolutely refused to inquire into the religious opinions of his men. He realized to the full that an Independent could fight to the full as well as a Presbyterian. So too when the Presbyterian ministers were very anxious to do to death John Biddle the Unitarian, so long as he himself lived Cromwell protected the daring and earnest preacher from their sectarian anger. In the army of life are many regiments: but there is one enemy to be destroyed, namely, selfishness. There is one captain, Jesus, whose beautiful life ought to be followed by all who 'profess and call themselves Christians' at least. The regiments have one aim, to do useful service on earth to fit themselves for further service in heaven. The uniforms may be different, but the purpose is one. Boys and girls then from the beginning should learn to be kind and respectful to others, who may go to a different chapel or school, who may think differently from themselves. They will then grow up to be broad-minded and kindly men and women who without sacrificing a real conviction of their own have a brotherly respect for the convictions of others. Always remember that tolerance does not mean indifference, but respect for the beliefs and thoughts of others. We must cherish our own beliefs when we have once made them our own. But we must be ready

to work with others, who hold different beliefs. Richard Baxter was a strong Calvinist beyond a doubt. Yet he desired to establish a 'Comprehensive Church,' that is, a Church which could find room for the different Christian sects of his day. His dream has gone; but a better and kindlier spirit is abroad than was in his day. Boys and girls, as they grow up, can learn to let this be the Spirit of their lives, and they will help the 'kingdom of God' to come a little sooner upon earth.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Alfred Hall's 'James Martineau.' So also many of the lives in 'Memorable Unitarians,' for example, 'Mary Somerville,' pp. 282–286.

2. A. N. Blatchford's 'Landmarks in Religious History,' Essex Hall, under 'The Work of Erasmus,' pp. 51–64.

Lesson XVII

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY

Luke ix. 51–56

(51) And it came to pass, when the days were being fulfilled that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, (52) and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. (53) And they did not receive him, because his face was *as though he were* going to Jerusalem. (54) And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did? (55) But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. (56) And they went to another village.

Point of the Lesson. James and John were insulted by the fact that the inhabitants of a little village in Samaria would not receive Jesus because he was clearly going up to Jerusalem. The Samaritans and the Jews hated one another with a bitter hatred, so bitter indeed that they would not show hospitality to one another. The two 'Sons of thunder' wanted to imitate Elijah in the old tradition, which represents him as calling down fire from heaven to consume the companies of soldiers sent to take him captive. Jesus at once rebuked their revengeful temper. He bade them learn that Christianity was not a religion of revenge, but a religion of forgiveness.

51. The first words of this verse were written from the point of view of one who looks back upon the events

which he is narrating after the passing of some time. The disciples at least, when they were on their way to Jerusalem, did not realize that he was going to certain death. Luke, writing long after the event, was filled with the thought of the coming death of Jesus. Hence he speaks of 'the days when he should be taken up into heaven.' Jesus himself divined that he would be put to death soon after he reached Jerusalem, since his teaching was utterly opposed to those in authority there. Yet he did not shrink from facing death, but 'set his face fixed firmly towards Jerusalem.' From him we should learn to face our duty, however dangerous it may be.

52. He chose the more direct route through the land of the Samaritans, which was not generally followed by his countrymen on their journeys to the national feasts, because of their hatred to this people. Such national hatred never entered into his loving heart. Hence he sent on messengers to secure a night's lodgings in one of the villages. They would try to get a place for him and his disciples where they could eat a common meal and sleep on rugs on the floor. But even as he was entering the village, his face looked towards Jerusalem, and his mind was busy with thoughts of the future.

53. Hence the villagers, who hated Jerusalem and all of the Jews, would not receive him or find him a lodging. They would do nothing to help 'a dog of a Jew.' N.B.—The Samaritans were of a mixed race, who found their way back to Samaria after the exile of the rest of Israel in Babylon. When the Jews of the pure race returned and set about rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem, these Samaritans came and asked to be allowed to take part in it. The Jews warned them off roughly. Hence they hated the Jews, built their own Temple on Mount Gerizim, and had their own copy of the Pentateuch (or first five books of the Old Testament).

A handful of this race still remains. In the time of Jesus there were many more of them, and their hatred of the Jews was at its height.

54. James and John the sons of Zebedee, whom on account of their fiery temper Jesus had called 'Boanerges' or 'Sons of thunder,' burning with indignation at this treatment of their Master, bethought them of the old tradition of Elijah, which they believed to be literally true. He was said to have destroyed companies of armed men by calling down fire from heaven upon them (II Kings i. 10, 12). Why should not they, the followers of the Messiah himself, do the like, and burn up the presumptuous villagers? They little realized what fate awaited Jesus, and how his lot was through extreme suffering to win men to the truth.

55. Jesus, whose mind was filled with forebodings of the coming tragedy, whose loving heart overflowed with forgiveness to and pity for the prejudiced Samaritans, turned to James and John and rebuked them, saying, 'You do not understand the spirit of my life and teaching. I am come to save men, not to destroy them.' The forward disciples would be put to silence by the quiet dignity and loving nature of his rebuke. Thus boys and girls are taught the lesson of ready forgiveness of injuries of every kind by Jesus himself, who forgave his foes when he hung on the cross.

56. So they contented themselves with going on to another village, whose people were less prejudiced and more willing to perform that sacred duty in the East of hospitality to wayfarers.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Revenge is not Christian. At school boys and girls are fond of taking revenge upon one another, thinking that such conduct is sweet. However sweet it may be to the bad side of their hearts, it is neither good nor

right. It is far better to suffer wrong patiently than to do wrong. The old savage plan is, 'You hit me and I will hit you.' That was just what Jesus was born into the world to teach us all, young or old, not to do. The only religious body which strictly follows Jesus in this respect is 'The Society of Friends,' or 'Quakers' as they are often called. What is more, they have succeeded where others have failed in this respect. When Sir William Penn took his Quaker colony to Pennsylvania, at first they were troubled by the enmity of the North American Indians. Some of them were killed by these wild but noble children of the woods. But when the Indians found that the 'Friends' showed them nothing but kindness and never killed them in revenge, they became friendly to the new settlers. When they went out to attack other white men of a less patient kind, they passed by the Quaker settlements, calling their people their 'white brothers.' Long after Penn's time, the parents of John Greenleaf Whittier, the Quaker poet, lived on a comparatively lonely farm close to the wigwams of the Indians. But they never had anything to fear from their neighbours, who would come and talk with them, when they were marching to attack less kindly white men. These too were called 'white brothers' by the red men. That is a lesson for us, who are always standing up for our rights in a more or less angry fashion. The true habit of mind of the Christian is a loving and forgiving spirit. It is stronger than any other spirit. It may lead boys and girls to some suffering, but in the end it will give them peace and happiness. The most quarrelsome boy is by no means the happiest boy. To begin with, he is always in hot water. Hence he is always in the habit of thinking that some one else has been doing him an ill-turn on purpose.

Mrs. Gaskell tells the story of John Middleton with great power and delicacy. He began life as an un-

educated working-man, who loved the public-house better than anything else. Somehow he won the love of a young woman much superior to him in education and position in the village of Sawley. For her sake he educated himself, he joined a chapel, where he became a leading man and a local preacher. His employer's son, seeing him with the girl, whom he wanted for himself, threw a big stone at her, which injured her for life. John Middleton remained true to her, and on his marriage removed with her to another village, where he got good work and became a considerable man. He had never seen the coward who had injured his wife so cruelly for long years. He was a man much respected and of good repute. One night, when his wife had retired to bed very ill, a ragged and disreputable man came begging to the door. He did not know John Middleton, nor did John Middleton recognize him at first. He took him into his house, seeing that he was on the point of death. As the man lay on the hearth, John Middleton realized that his bitter enemy was in his power at last. Then anger rose in his heart. Should he turn him adrift to die on the cold wayside? He had a hard struggle in his mind, which kept him busy for a long time. At length he came to the conclusion that forgiveness was better than revenge. He gave that man a morsel of food and went out for the doctor to give him a last attendance. The man died, and John Middleton knew for the first time the eternal truth of the old words, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.' That is a hard example to follow. But when it is set before us, we cannot doubt that John Middleton did right. Nay, more, he did what made him a truer man than if he had turned out his enemy to die in the cold night.

Boys and girls should keep this example in mind and

be content to refrain from revenge. An untrue proverb says, 'Revenge is sweet.' It is only sweet in a hard and bitter heart. There is something far sweeter, which leaves no bitterness in the heart, no self-accusations on the conscience. Moreover, it is something which is in the power of all of us: that is, forgiveness and a readiness to help our enemy if he needs it. Never think that forgiveness is cowardly. It is much more cowardly to take revenge than to forgive. It is much harder and braver to forgive than to take revenge upon anyone. That is a good lesson for boys and girls to learn from the beginning of their conscious life. When once it has been learned thoroughly by constant practice, those who have learned it will win the love and honour of those among whom they live. What is of far more importance, God the dear and loving Father of all of us, will breathe his quiet peace into our hearts.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Colonel Newcome's forgiveness of the first insult to him of his nephew Barnes. Thackeray's 'Newcomes,' Chapters xiii., xiv.

2. Tennyson's 'Idyll of Guinevere,' where the king forgives his guilty wife. See Studies on Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King,' Essex Hall.

3. See also below, Lesson XXXIV., on the Parable of 'The Prodigal Son.'

Lesson XVIII

EXCUSES

Luke ix. 57–62

(57) And as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (58) And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes and the birds of heaven nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. (59) And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (60) But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God. (61) And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. (62) Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Point of the Lesson. Some of the men who heard Jesus were deeply moved by his teaching. To such he put plainly the difficulties of being his disciples, and they would seem to have left him, not being prepared to make the needful sacrifices. Two he called to follow him; but they at once began to make excuses and to ask permission to do something else first. The warning to boys and girls is first to realize the difficulties in the way of being disciples, then to face these and to make no excuses. In other words, at all costs they must listen to his teaching and imitate the unselfish goodness of his life.

57. The first, who of his own free will offered to follow Jesus, was one of those impulsive, changeable men, represented in the 'Parable of the Sower' by 'the Rocky Places,' who could not endure pain and hardship. He was moved for the moment: but the keen glance of Jesus looked into his soul and perceived that his fervour was not likely to last.

58. Jesus, acting upon that same keen insight into the hearts of men, at once put before this man the difficulties which he would be called upon to face. 'Even the wild beasts have their dens, and the wild birds their nests; but the Messiah has no resting-place for his head.' The words 'Son of man' may mean 'the Messiah,' and may have been used by Jesus of himself. Or they may mean 'Man in general' and point out that man has to find a resting-place for himself. The former meaning would seem to give the best sense. The answer then of Jesus would mean, 'You think it a fine and easy task to follow me: I have not even a home like the wild creatures.'

59. Jesus caught sight of another listening eagerly to him, and seeing something attractive in him, called him to become his disciple. Clearly the man was not ready to make the sacrifice, having doubtless heard the words just spoken to the other. His excuse may have been a true one: 'Let me bury my father.' Why had he not been doing this dutiful task already, if he cared so greatly for it, instead of standing with the crowd listening to Jesus?

60. The answer of Jesus does not prohibit him from going to bury his father. It is couched in the words of a popular proverb, and used to point to the greater importance of preaching and living the gospel. The words seem to mean, as used by Jesus, 'Let those who are dead to the new life and the greater truth bury those who are physically dead.' There is no real harshness

in the words. Jesus means, 'Your duty to your dead father is great, but your duty to God is greater.' Moreover, the man's plea would seem to have been of the nature of an excuse. When he got home, he would think nothing more of the words which he had heard Jesus speaking, nor of the influence of the Teacher which had stirred his heart for a moment. Jesus often used the sayings and trivial circumstances of his people to point to some supreme truth. The lesson here is, duty comes first and no excuses will serve our turn, if we neglect it.

61. Another came to Jesus who had been stirred by his teaching. He too was ready to be a disciple, but upon his own terms. He would first say 'good-bye' to his friends. The moment he got home, as Jesus knew very well and perhaps the man himself, his friends would try to dissuade him from following the 'Man of Nazareth.' Indeed, like Lot's wife in the old Hebrew legend, he was hanging back, looking back, and thinking of the comforts of home, when he ought to have been going forward. God demands our whole being. That we have to give him in spite of all sacrifices. When a drunkard says, 'I will be a teetotaller, if I may only go to the old inn and say good-bye to my old friends,' he is not very likely to become a teetotaller just then. He should sign the pledge at once and keep it.

62. Jesus answered this one too in the manner of a proverb. 'When a man puts his hand to the plough, if he looks backward he will not drive a straight furrow. He must look in front. The kingdom of God demands of all his children the sacrifice of their all for its sake.' Jesus does not mean that we are to be unkind to our friends or to our kindred, but that we are to esteem our duty to our God as of more importance than even these. When this calls us, we are apt to make excuses, when we ought to go straight to the duty, and to do it in spite of the hindrances of those most dear to us.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Excuses. Nothing worth doing is easy. To get on at school boys and girls need to work hard, whether they be clever or not. To be good and kind always is not easy. We need to be unselfish and thoughtful towards others. We need to keep our temper, to be forgiving, and to take care not to wound anyone. Goodness does not lead always to prosperity. We must be ready to face much trial and persecution for its sake. Nor must we begin to make excuses when the two ways are before us, the way of right and the way of wrong. When a boy in a fit of temper hits another very hard, it will not excuse him to say, 'I did not mean to hurt him very much.' He ought not to have meant to hurt him at all. Excuses are of two chief kinds. They are plausible fictions uttered when we do not want to do what we know that we ought to do. They are attempts to do away with our wrongdoing when it is done. They are not often good, still less often sufficient. It must be remembered that they are not the same thing as 'giving a real reason for doing or not doing something.'

A prisoner stood in the dock in the Police Court. He was a strong, middle-aged man, but untidy and unkempt. He earned good wages, but he spent much of them upon himself. He stood where he was, because he had neglected to give his wife and children enough to simply feed and clothe them, while he had not taken the trouble to see that they went to school. When he was asked what he had to say for himself, he had the boldness to say, 'I did not know that I was doing wrong.' The magistrates rightly did not admit such a false excuse. The man knew well enough when he was wasting his money upon his own idle pleasures and neglecting his home, that he was doing wrong. He learned it more surely by serving a term of imprisonment with hard labour.

So too there is the case of what is called 'playing the old soldier,' that is, of trying to excuse idleness on the plea of illness. Illness may be real enough; but boys and girls of various ages can put on illness, when they want to shirk their duty of work. When they are asked to do something by father, mother, or teacher, they should not begin at once to ask to be allowed to do something else. It is their duty to respect the wish of these, and duty will not keep. If they begin to make excuses, the duty will never be done. A girl promised her mother, who was weak and ill, to do some of the heavy spring-cleaning. 'Let me go for a walk with my friends to-day,' she asked, 'and I will begin to do the work to-morrow.' Sadly her mother let her go. But the work had to be done, since a friend was coming soon to stay in the house. She set herself to the task, and when her daughter came home, she found her mother stretched on the floor in a kind of fainting-fit. She had overtaxed her weak strength, and she lay for long days on a bed of pain and suffering, because her girl wanted to do something pleasanter than helping her mother at once. What excuse could the girl make? 'I never thought that it would have come to this.' No, she could not have foreseen what actually happened. But she ought to have remembered that her first duty was to help her mother.

A boy was sent to call his father home from work. His mother did not tell him why. Her younger child was very ill, and she wanted her husband to see it before it passed away. As the boy went along he met some of his companions who were playing at football. He longed to go with them, and at last he yielded to the temptation and forgot all about his errand. When he did remember what his mother had asked him to do, it was too late. The little child died before the father could reach it. That boy would remember his excuse

silently made to himself as long as he lived. 'It will do if I go a little later; one quarter of an hour cannot make much difference.' It did make all the difference between truth and falsehood, between doing right and doing wrong. The great artist Millais painted a great picture called the 'Huguenots.' In it a young French Protestant is represented with his sweetheart clinging about him. She is trying to persuade him to wear a scarf on his arm, so that he might pass for a Catholic on the night of the 'Massacre of St. Bartholomew,' when all Protestants in Paris were to be murdered. The young Huguenot is represented as resisting all the excuses which she would have had him make. He may have been slain; but his conscience was clear, since he had tried to make no excuses in the way of duty.

Do your duty without making excuses, and you will need to make no excuses.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See the first verses of the 'Parable of the Marriage Feast' (Matthew xxii., especially 1–5), with Trench's 'Notes on the Parable,' pp. 219 seqq.

2. See Robert Moore's excuse for his unkindness to Caroline Helstone in Charlotte Brontë's 'Shirley,' near the end of Chapter xxxvii., which she accepted, but which did not excuse him.

3. See Longfellow's 'Excelsior,' where the youth persisted in going upward without making any excuse.

Lesson XIX

OUR NEIGHBOUR

Luke x. 25–37

(25) And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? (26) And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? (27) And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. (28) And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. (29) But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? (30) Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. (31) And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. (32) And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. (33) But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, (34) and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. (35) And on the morrow he took out two denarii, and he gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. (36) Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers? (37) And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Point of the Lesson. This is quite simple. The lesson teaches us to 'love our neighbour as ourselves,' that is, to be ready to care for and to help others.

25. The 'lawyer' was a 'teacher of the law,' that is, of the first five books of the Bible. Sometimes too he interpreted the Prophets to his pupils. He was also called *Rabbi* or 'my great sir.' One of these wished to try Jesus, and perhaps to trip him up; so he asked him what he was to do 'to inherit eternal life.'

26. Jesus, as was his wont, made him answer himself. He asked, 'What has the law to say about this? What do you find written therein?'

27. The 'lawyer' answered him by rattling off, like children do a catechism learned by rote, the words from Deuteronomy and Leviticus, which were often discussed in minute detail by his fellow-teachers. The words mean in effect, 'Love God with your whole being, and your neighbour as yourself.'

28–29. Jesus thus made his questioner answer himself out of the Scriptures, which it was his task to teach; then he added the words, 'Do this, and thou shalt live.' The Rabbi was caught in his own cleverness, and wishing to find a way out of his confusion, he asked, this time probably with greater respect, 'Who is my neighbour?' Doubtless he himself would have taught his pupils this, 'My neighbour is one of my own people who needs help.' The answer of Jesus was different and was uttered for all time.

30. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was most dangerous, and in winter time it was little better than the course of a mountain torrent. Bands of robbers haunted it to murder and to steal. The Jewish traveller was returning home after doing business in Jerusalem, and was no doubt carrying a large sum of money with him. The robbers met him, robbed him, and left him for dead upon that dangerous road, which was known as 'the pass of the red' from the murders which had been committed upon it.

31. The priest was the first to come. He had prob-

ably been taking part in some service in the Temple. When he saw the wounded Jew, he knew well enough what was his neighbourly duty to him. But fear made him neglect it, and pass by on the other side, lest he too should be robbed and maltreated.

32. The Levite was a little later. He had had to take his share in cleansing and closing the Temple, after the sacrifice had been offered. He knew that the priest had passed that way before him and must have seen the wounded Jew. So he in his turn neglected his duty and passed by on the other side. These two, who had been taking part in the Temple sacrifice, went to their homes without fulfilling their own Law, which bade them 'love their neighbours as themselves.'

33. The Samaritan came next. He was by race a bitter enemy of the Jews, whom they would hate and despise as a worshipper on Gerizim. But when he saw the wounded man, he thought neither of race nor of national enmity. He only saw a wounded neighbour, who needed his care.

34. Regardless of danger he went up to him, moistened his lips with wine and poured oil into his wounds. He lifted him gently on to his own ass and took him to an inn by the way. N.B.—This 'inn' would not be like ours, but simply a place where the ass could be stabled and where travellers could lie on their mats upon the floor.

35. But the Samaritan remembered that the Jew had been robbed. So he gave the host two *denarii*. These were small Roman coins worth about 9d. each, but with far greater purchasing power than they would have to-day. We might translate the word loosely 'two shillings.' This sum he gave for the wounded man's present support, and promised more if more were needed, when he came that way again. Clearly the host knew him well and trusted his word.

36–37. Having told his story, Jesus asked the Rabbi which of the three had been 'neighbour to the wounded man.' The Rabbi, who would not use the hated word *Samaritan*, answered, 'He who shewed mercy upon him.' Thus he answered his own question and received from Jesus the advice, 'Go, and do thou likewise.' The Samaritan risked his life to help the wounded man. Boys and girls must learn to be neighbourly to all who need their help, and kindly to all.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Our Duty to our Neighbour. The story of the 'Good Samaritan' can be best illustrated by a similar story from America, when slaves were still used and abused in the Southern States. One plantation was owned by a harsh and cruel sugar-planter, who had many slaves, whom he would beat and torture upon the slightest provocation. Amongst these was one known as 'Old Abe,' who had suffered much, yet whose heart was filled with true kindness. One evening he heard his fellow-slaves plotting to murder their master. He tried to reason with them, but they threatened him with death. He had not time to warn his master of the fate which was in store for him. But he set off to the planter's house as fast as his aged limbs could carry him. The other slaves had been before him, and left the planter lying on the ground, as they thought dead, while they made off. The first to come was the clergyman, who had often dined with the planter to whom he owed his living, who had preached eloquently to the slaves on their duty of submission to their master, who had been loaded with benefits by the man left for dead. But when he saw his benefactor lying on the ground, he turned away, and thinking of his own life, went out, leaving him to die. 'By chance there came down a certain priest that way. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.'

A little while after came in the manager of the plantation, who owed his all to the man bleeding out his life on the ground. But he began to think of the danger, and saying to himself, ' It will be my turn next,' he went out and fled as fast as he could. ' Likewise also a Levite, when he was at the place, saw him and passed by on the other side.' At length Old Abe made his appearance. He had put his life in his hands. His fellow-slaves had followed him at a distance, since they suspected him of kindness to their master. But he had got a long start of them and had outstripped them. There in his dining-room he saw him lying on the carpet, who had often beaten and cruelly used him. But he forgot his sufferings. He only saw a dying man, and he knew that it was his duty to help him. ' Likewise also a Samaritan saw him and had pity on him.'

He took up the planter on his shoulders to carry him through the plantation to the house of another planter, which lay at some distance. As he went along he heard the whispering voices of his fellow-slaves, who had returned to the house to finish off their terrible work. Once more he was well in front of them, and he hurried along as fast as he could, carrying his heavy load. When they found that their prey had been filched away from them, divining the direction which he had taken, they set off in pursuit of Old Abe. They quickly came in view of him toiling along through the clear moonlight night. The other planter's house was near at hand, guarded with armed men, when the slaves had nearly reached their fellow-slave. They began to throw large stones at him, since they dared not go too near the house. Just as he had got to the door and laid his master gently down, a great stone hit him and killed him. So he had given his life to save that of his cruel tyrant and enemy. The wounded man and the dead slave were taken inside, while the rest of the slaves disappeared in the plantation.

The planter was recalled to life, but not to be the same man. When he saw his dead slave, he asked, 'Did Old Abe bring me here?' 'Yes,' was the reply. 'Then God forgive me,' he said, 'I will never keep another slave, as long as I live.' In the little churchyard is a white cross, with the simple words, 'Old Abe. Died. He was faithful unto death.'

'Which of these three, think you, was neighbour to that planter?' 'He who pitied and helped him.' 'Go and do likewise.' The story is so simple and true that it speaks for itself. We may not have to do exactly what the Good Samaritan and the old slave did. But often enough we shall have to be neighbourly to those whom we do not like, just because they are our brothers and sisters, just because they need our help. If we truly love and serve our brothers and sisters whom we see around us, we shall learn to love and serve the great Father of us all, whom we do not see, but whose love is over all his children.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See the kindness of the 'Rivers family' to Jane Eyre in her distress. Charlotte Brontë's 'Jane Eyre,' Chapters xxxviii.–xxxxi.

2. Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of Dorothea Lynde Dix.'

Lesson XX

MARTHA AND MARY

Luke x. 38-42.

(38) Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. (39) And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. (40) But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. (41) But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: (42) but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Point of the Lesson. Many who have not caught the tenderness of the tone of Jesus, have thought that his rebuke of Martha was harsh and severe. The harshness or gentleness of a reproof depends upon the tone in which it is uttered. The very repetition of the word Martha implies tenderness, like our 'My dear Martha.' What Jesus means is this: 'Do not let things of lesser importance absorb all your care from things that are of greater importance.' He did not blame Martha for making elaborate preparations in his honour, but for thinking these were of greater importance than the truths which Mary longed to hear.

38. The 'certain village' was Bethany, a village lying on the slope of the Mount of Olives, near to Jerusalem, where Jesus would seem often to have stayed on his journeys to and from Jerusalem (John xi. 1, 19–20).

It is not impossible that he retired here to spend the night during the time he was in Jerusalem before his trial and death.

39. While Martha was busily engaged in making a feast for her guest, Mary was listening to his teaching. She was perhaps a little inconsiderate in that. But doubtless she felt the opportunity of hearing Jesus to be of such grave importance, that she forgot all else in her eagerness to hear. No doubt she had taken her share in the preparations before he had arrived. Jesus himself, whose 'meat it was to do the will of him who sent him,' would think little of the meal which was being served. He cared far more to speak to one who was ready to hear.

40. Martha, tired and hot with the serving up of her feast, was naturally somewhat angry with her sister, who had left her so much to do. Hence her tone may have been a little pettish when she asked Jesus to bid Mary to help her. She was proud of her housewifery and proud of her guest, whose teaching she also longed to hear. But there would be time enough to hear that after dinner, she thought. It was her complaining tone which Jesus answered, we may be sure, with a kindly smile and in a gentle voice.

41. His words meant something like this, 'Ah! my dear Martha, you are anxious to make a great feast for me, and you have got ready many things for that kindly purpose. Did you not know that I had no need of so many things? One thing is needful before all else, to learn the truth about God and life. That is what Mary has chosen to learn; I cannot chide her for her choice.'

42. 'The good part,' that is the knowledge which leads to eternal life, which is after all more important than a sumptuous banquet. It was the comparison between the pleasures of the table and the word of truth and life, which forced itself upon the mind of Jesus.

According to his habit he used this homely event to drive home a moral. He could see Martha hot and tired, just a little angry and not entirely without reason. He could see her piling dishes upon the table. He could sympathize with and appreciate her wish to do him honour ; but he could also see how little she understood the deep thoughts which filled his mind, and how small was his need of such a banquet. Hence he wanted to draw Martha's heart to what he felt to be of supreme importance. Like Mary, in the interest of his teaching, he had forgotten all about the feast which occupied so much of Martha's mind. Hence he taught her the lesson of setting the more important before the less important. The rebuke was uttered, I doubt not, with a tender kindliness which would go straight to Martha's heart. When a noted minister came to conduct some anniversary services, after the morning service he retired to think over his evening sermon. So engrossed was he in his thought about his duties in the evening, that he quite forgot about his dinner, and was much surprised when he was reminded of it. Martha's care was both kind and needful. It was only her tendency to set the feast first in her thoughts which Jesus rebuked. Wise boys and girls will seek to win Martha's careful exactness in little duties, while they open their hearts to greater thoughts and greater duties. That is the lesson which we may learn from this event in the life of Jesus, to

Serve with careful Martha's hand
And loving Mary's heart.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Do not despise the less important things, but value the greater things more. Boys and girls are apt to forget the most important things in life and to care supremely for the less important things. When they are at school

they do not always perceive he immense value of trying to learn as much as they can. The desire for play comes strongly upon them at the time when they ought to be working. Play is good, natural, and health-giving. But they should get hold of learning in the time for learning, while they should play in the proper time for play.

A group of boys stood outside an orchard in autumn. They had had leave to go in and pick up as many apples and pears as they could carry away. But just as they were going into the orchard the school-bell rang. They were all of them keenly disappointed, since this was the only opportunity of their getting any of the fruit. All of them fell before the temptation and went into the orchard save one, who ran off to school. Of all those boys he was the only one who realized that his learning in the school was of more value to him than many apples and pears. The apples and pears would soon be eaten and the pleasure of eating them forgotten. But what he learned at school would be useful to him during the rest of his life. The other boys valued their present pleasure more than their future good: they twitted him with having lost his opportunity, and showed him their apples and pears to make his mouth water. But when the end of the term came, he won a scholarship which took him to a great grammar school, from which he was able to go up to Oxford, where he won a great place in the degree examinations. It was his habit of thinking first of the more important things, which helped him on in life. Besides, the boys who had spent their afternoon in the orchard, had lost something more than learning, they had lost something of their character. Their parents expected them to be at school filling their minds with knowledge. They were in the orchard filling themselves with fruit and their pockets too. Boys and girls must always remember that eating and drinking,

though needful and usually pleasant, are not the chief things in life.

In our homes there is something better than a good Christmas dinner, good as that undoubtedly is. A little girl had been with her father and mother to Christmas morning service at an old city chapel. She had heard the minister telling of the loving-kindness of Jesus, and she longed to do something for 'that good man who had called the children to him.' On her way home her thoughts were divided between her pleasure in a good Christmas dinner and the lesson which she had learned that morning. By chance she peeped down into the window of a poor cottage. Through the dim glass she saw a lonely little orphan child who had no Christmas dinner, but only a bit of dry bread and a morsel of drier cheese. Then the girl's tender heart went out to the orphan child. She trotted home, and putting her share of the Christmas dinner into a basket she took it to the orphan, whose eyes brightened and whose heart was gladdened and who thought her little less than an angel for her kindness to him. She had learned the lesson that there is something more important in life than a good dinner, she had helped another to spend a happy Christmas. The story is true in essence, though it is not exact in detail, but its example is fresh and good for all boys and girls.

Martha did good work in getting the dinner ready, though she may have been a little anxious to provide more than was necessary. Mary felt the need in her soul of listening to the teaching of Jesus, whom she had not often the chance of hearing. Let boys and girls remember not to neglect the smaller things in life, but to remember that there are other and greater things, which must not be neglected but fill a proper proportion of our care. First they must try to get a good character: they must learn to choose present duty in preference

to present enjoyment. Longfellow says admirably :—

> Not enjoyment and not sorrow
> Is our destined end or way ;
> But to act that each to-morrow
> Find us farther than to-day.

This means that every day we must learn to be just as good and loving as we can be, so that the next day we shall be able to begin with a good start, and grow even kinder and better. Let boys and girls never fail to do little duties carefully and exactly ; but let them never fail to learn the greater duties at the same time, to choose wisely between the greater and the less and to let their whole strength follow their choice.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. The life of Florence Nightingale illustrates excellently the wonderful combination of Mary and Martha in her character.
2. Alfred Hall's ' James Martineau.'

Lesson XXI

PERSEVERANCE

Luke xi. 5–10

(5) And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; (6) for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; (7) and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee? (8) I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him whatsoever things he needeth. (9) And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (10) For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Point of the Lesson. The point of this little story from everyday life is persistence in prayer. Many give up praying because they see no immediate answer to their prayers and because they forget that their prayers may be answered by denial. That is both wrong and short-sighted. 'The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small.' We have to wait often for the answer to prayer. But if the prayer be not simply selfish, the answer does come, though not always in the way we desire or expect.

5–6. In the East hospitality was a sacred duty. If

a friend came from a distance, and had nowhere to lodge in the town, it was the bounden duty of his friend to see to him. So too every good Jew was bound to obey the injunction in Leviticus (xix. 18), 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' In other words, he was really bound to minister to the needs of his neighbour, however inconvenient it might be. Such a scene as is described in these verses might have happened easily in any of the towns of Galilee, amongst which Jesus preached. The roads were hard to travel, even though the distance might not be great. Hence a friend from some way off might easily come late at night—that is, late for a people who went to bed early and rose early. He at whose house he had arrived, would want three loaves, or rather perhaps three cakes, to set before the weary traveller.

7-8. Not every Jew was a faithful Jew. The friend inside had gone to bed, that is, laid himself down on his rug with his family. Perhaps they were actually all lying on his cloak, as was the custom with the poorer people. But we can fancy the grumbling tone of the sleepy friend inside to the importunate friend outside. It is not pleasant to be disturbed after we have gone to bed. The answer would be uttered in a surly tone—'I cannot trouble now, we are all gone to rest.' But in spite of his first rebuff the friend on the outside of the door would grow more pressing, while the man inside to be rid of him would get up and give him the three cakes, and thus fulfil his duty though a little unwillingly.

9-10. Jesus draws the moral of persistence in prayer from his story. 'Ask, seek, and knock,' he says. 'Do not be weary in prayer, because you see no immediate results. Have complete trust in God, that he will answer at last, even if he do not answer at once.' Many a boy wants something very much from his father, and he asks one day after another. It may be something which is not good for him. Hence his father does not grant

that request: but he will do something for him which is good for him.

'Seek.' We shall never find anything, if we never look for it. We shall never find God, unless we seek him. Let boys and girls never forget to pray. Nobody else can pray for them in quite the same way as they can pray for themselves. They know their own needs and their own desires best. Again, it is of little use to stand before a closed door without knocking, if we want to go into the house. In John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' when Christian has passed through the Slough of Despond, a narrow gate lies before him, through which is the entrance to the road leading to the Celestial City. But this gate is only opened to those who knock. If boys and girls wish to grow up good and honourable, they must ask God to open the narrow gate of the good life to them. They must ask him to help them to keep along that narrow and often difficult road to the end. If they are in earnest in their prayers, he will hear and help them.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Perseverance. Whenever we want to get on in life, we are forced to persevere. A Latin proverb says truly 'Perseverance conquers all difficulties.' It does not matter what our object may be, if we want to attain it, we have to work without ceasing towards it.

A poor boy about fifteen years old went up to one of the great colleges in Cambridge as a servitor. He only got leave to attend several classes, in return for which favour he had to wait on his fellow-students, to clean their shoes, to keep their rooms in order, and to sleep where he could. He was much knocked about by richer youths and by the Dons, or teachers, who despised him. But he kept always the ambition before him of learning

as much as he could. He followed all the work in the classes, which he was suffered to attend, and made himself master of the subjects taught in them. He wanted to learn Greek, and he picked up much of that difficult language while he was employed in dusting the room and putting things away. He saved a few pence and bought a Greek book. Then he did his best to work through it and to find out what it meant. One day, as he was sitting on the steps, conning his Greek book, one of the Dons came upon him. He was surprised to see the book, one of Plato's, in his hands. Then he questioned the youth, and when he found what he had done, he gave him all the help in his power. By his perseverance that youth grew up to be one of the greatest of scholars in Cambridge. So if boys and girls persistently ask God to help them to live good and useful lives, never forgetting at the same time to try their best, he will assuredly help them.

There is nothing worth winning in life which comes without perseverance. Christopher Columbus found a piece of drift-wood on the shore, and he came to the conclusion that there must be another land across the Atlantic Ocean, since the piece of wood was part of a tree which did not grow in Spain. He sought earnestly for ships from Ferdinand and Isabella the King and Queen of Spain, who listened to him, gave him fair words, and put him off from day to day. But he never ceased to importune them, until at length they granted his request. But they did not treat him according to his deserts. When he had at length gained them over to his side, they only gave him two unseaworthy ships. Yet his persistent request gained him this much of an answer. Praying earnestly to God, he set sail with these, working his way against the storms of the treacherous ocean. He hoped to conquer the new land, if he found it, for Christianity Seeking ever, he set his sails to move

forward. His sailors, distressed by the perils of the deep, tried their utmost to induce him to give up his search. But believing that God had sent him on his voyage of discovery, he worked and prayed and toiled onwards. In the end when he was all but within sight of land, he had to promise them that if they saw no land within three days he would put back to Spain. The next morning the fair shores of the Western Indies broke upon the wondering eyes of the crew. So Columbus by his perseverance in seeking won the object of his search. Had he yielded at the first discouragement, he would have found nothing. By persistence in prayer to the King and Queen he got his ships. By his persistence in prayer to God he won the end of his search.

Boys and girls should remember the example of this great man. Life has often been compared to sea, wherein the 'Isles of the Blessed' are lying, that is, the Isles where all men live in peace and joy and happiness. Beyond these lies that heaven to which we are going. If boys and girls want to find these 'Happy Islands' in life, they must pray to God to keep them faithful and true. None the less they must trim their sails and work on to the object of their longing. There is no royal road to happiness any more than there is to learning. Some may find the way easier than others; but all need to pray to God to give them strength to lead good and true lives. The task is difficult beyond words. But if boys and girls will set the aim of being good, true, and kind before them and never forget to pray to God to help them to realize their aim, they will by his blessing find the 'Happy Islands,' where they will rejoice in peace and happiness for the most part. It is foolish to give up praying, because we see no immediate results of our prayers. But we must use prayer as the inspiration to work and turn our prayers into noble deeds.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See Morley's 'Life of Gladstone' for that great man's persistence in prayer.

2. See Gardiner's little book on 'Cromwell' to learn a similar lesson.

3. See James Montgomery's two hymns, 'What shall we ask of God in Prayer' and 'Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,' to learn what prayer is and use them as an inspiration.

Lesson XXII

THE SINGLE EYE

Luke xi. 33–36

(33) No man, when he hath lighted a lamp, putteth it in a cellar, neither under the bushel, but on the stand, that they which enter in may see the light. (34) The lamp of thy body is thine eye: when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, thy whole body is full of darkness. (35) Look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness. (36) If therefore thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give thee light.

Point of the Lesson. Luke uses this comparison somewhat differently from Matthew, as its context is different. The lesson teaches us to let the light of single-hearted goodness and purity shine in our souls. Then shall we see how to live truly and help others to live.

33. The Eastern lamp bore some resemblance to a very shallow teapot. It was filled with olive-oil, and the wick, often made of dried fibres of plants, or rather of the pith of plants, was set through the spout. The lamp had a little handle by which it could be carried about. Every house had a stand, which would hold one or more of these lamps. In the Temple was such a stand made of gold and with seven branches. When such a lamp was lighted it would not be set up in the cellar. Neither would it be put under the 'bushel,' or large

earthenware jar used as a measure for corn and other things. A lamp set under such a jar would soon burn up the air and go out. When it was once lighted, it would be placed upon the stand, so that all who came into the room could see the light.

34. Jesus uses the image of the lamp to represent the eye first, then the character. An eye which sees double is out of order and needs attention. A character which is deceitful and double-minded needs curing. If 'our eye be single,' we shall see things as they are. Of course the word *eye* refers to both eyes. The reason why we have two eyes is to help us to see more clearly. But they must come to a proper focus, or we shall see nothing distinctly. Moreover, if what is called a cataract comes over the eye, our sight is darkened; for a time we see nothing but a mist; then our sight finally vanishes entirely. If the cataract be removed, we are usually able to see again, though not quite so well as before.

35. We need then to take great care of our bodily eyes, so that we may be able to see what is around us. Think how terrible is the state of a man who goes blind suddenly; how he can see nothing, but is walking always in the dark. Such is the soul-blindness of a bad character. The one who has it spends all his waking hours in the darkness of evil. A gambler can see hardly anything but the gaming-table, nothing in the evening paper but the betting odds. A drunkard can see hardly any other building in the street but the public-house. Both of these classes of sinners scarcely seem to see their wives and children who are suffering from their evil folly. We must take care that our character is simple and true and straightforward, kindly and loving. Then we shall walk in the light.

36. Such a character makes life not easy but straightforward to us. Moreover it makes life happy. Boys and girls must begin at the beginning. They cannot do

everything at once. In learning to read we must first master the alphabet. In learning to win a good character we must learn the alphabet of life, which is chiefly concerned with deeds. Remember that kind deeds issue from a kind heart. We must learn to see things as they are. Just as a lamp gives light in a dark room, so does a clear conscience give light in our soul. Moreover, it does not only give light to ourselves; just as the lamp shines through the window and guides the wanderer through the night, so does the manifestation of our good conscience shine through the darkness, giving light to others, who are thereby inspired to follow our example. On dangerous rocks at sea a lighthouse is set to save ships from running aground upon them and being wrecked. Sometimes also a bell is fixed, which is rung by the swaying of the restless wind. So a good character shines to warn others of dangerous places, and helps many to keep from making shipwreck of their lives. Boys and girls must learn with their earliest years to light the lamp of a good character and to keep it burning with kindly words and deeds. It will need such feeding from day to day. But if they will make the effort, they will never regret their trouble: they will learn the blessedness of walking in the clear light of the peace of God.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Single Eye of Straightforwardness. In Charles Kingsley's 'Westward Ho' there is the character of Amyas Leigh, who has the single eye, hence his life is for the most part straightforward and noble. When he was a boy he broke his schoolmaster's head with his slate. Then he went straight home to his mother, who anxiously asked him why he had come home before the proper time. He never dreamed of telling her a lie, but said exactly what he had done. In great perplexity she sent him to his godfather, Sir Richard Grenville,

to whom once more he told the simple truth. His godfather uttered a few words of sound advice to him and sent him back to his schoolmaster to take his punishment. Amyas never dreamed of disobeying his godfather: he saw that it was his plain duty to take his punishment, and he saw nothing else but that duty, until he had received his thrashing. Doubtless he did not like it; but it was his duty and he did it. Through the whole of his life he saw one plain duty at a time and did it at once, that he might be ready for the next. Hence when he went in command of a ship he kept his single eye, and however hard his duty was he did it. He was indeed a man of 'the single eye,' who could only see what was right to do and who went straight and did it. What wonder then that his men trusted him implicitly. Only once after a sea-fight, when they were very weary, did they murmur and said, 'Our Captain gives us all the hard work.' Amyas at once laid hold of a rope and showed them that he never shirked his duty. So weary as they were, they rose up and followed his example.

Such a man in real life was Francis Drake, the first Englishman to sail round the world. He never shrank from doing what he firmly believed to be his duty, namely, to damage the Spaniards as much as he could and to free the American Indians from their cruel tyranny. He never passed a hostile ship on his way round the world. He took his full share of the hard work on board. He toiled for England and Queen Elizabeth. When he landed, he saw clearly that the best way to make friends of the Indians was to trust them and to treat them kindly. The singleness of his heart taught him that great lesson, which some explorers have yet to learn. But he did not only do his duty on board ship and as a great captain. When he returned home he saw a means of bringing water from the downs above his native town of Plymouth. When he got his plan

perfected, he knew that it was his duty to carry it through. So he spent much time and money in giving a bountiful supply of pure water to the men and women of Plymouth. Drake was a very great man, a true-hearted Englishman, whom everybody trusted, because he had the single eye of a good character.

Sir Walter Raleigh was perhaps a man of greater genius. But after his long imprisonment in the Tower by the foolish James I, he lost the 'single eye,' if indeed he ever had it completely. He went on his last expedition to Guiana, knowing that he could not fulfil his promises. His voyage was a failure: he left his beloved son slain before a Spanish town, his faithful Admiral Keymis dead by his own hand because Raleigh had reproached him for the death of his son. He was treated with treachery by a cowardly and contemptible king. But he himself, as he knew well, returned home to die. He knew that he had not been exactly straightforward. Hence, though men admired Raleigh, they never trusted him as they trusted Drake. He came home to die: on the scaffold he made one of the most touching confessions of a life in great part wasted, because he had not a single eye.

Boys and girls cannot all be great, but they can all learn to win a good character. They must learn to see one duty at a time and to do it unflinchingly. When they are at school they must learn as much as they can, so that they may do their duty to their father and mother, who want them to do well. By so doing they will do their duty to their God, who has willed them to obey their father and their mother. They must learn to give up their own pleasure to help some one else, when the occasion arises, because that is their plain duty. The moment that they see some one who needs their help, and they see that they can help them, it becomes their duty to help. Nor will boys and girls ever have a quiet

conscience, if they neglect that duty. When they are at play, they must learn to play fair, to take no mean advantage over another, and to do no shabby tricks. Those who do these will never win a good character. As they have begun, they will grow up; and if they change when they are grown up, it will be twice as hard as it would have been to keep straight from the beginning. A true, kindly, unselfish heart is the light of life. It will show its brightness in words and deeds; it will be a joy to those who have it, and a help to others who only see its brightness in life.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. The character of 'Tom Pinch' in Dickens's 'Martin Chuzzlewit.'
2. The character of 'Colonel Newcome' in Thackeray's 'Newcomes.'
3. Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of Theophilus Lindsey.'

Lesson XXIII

OUTSIDE SHOW

Luke xi. 37–44

(37) Now as he spake, a certain Pharisee asked him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. (38) And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. (39) And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and platter; but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. (40) Ye foolish ones, did not he that made the outside make the inside also? (41) Howbeit give for alms those things which ye can; and behold, all things are clean unto you.

(42) But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over judgment and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (43) Woe unto you Pharisees! for ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the market-places. (44) Woe unto you! for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* know it not.

Point of the Lesson. The point of this lesson is not what we might think from a careless reading of the passage. It is good for us to wash before dinner, as well as healthy. Jesus did not forbid this (42). He wished to insist upon the fact, that many people make a brave outside show, and are careful of smaller niceties of manner or conduct, while they neglect to keep their hearts clean and pure. In other words, there are many hypocrites, whom old Thomas Fuller rightly called 'seeming saints, real devils.' Once more there are many men and

women and boys and girls too, who make a show of goodness to those who look at them simply from the outside, when their hearts are really filled with wickedness.

37. The Pharisees were very zealous for the minutest details of their ritual law, while many of them neglected the essence of it, which is found in the Ten Commandments and the 'Law of holiness' (Leviticus xix.). They were more exact in washing their hands before dinner than in 'loving their neighbour as themselves.' It was into the house of one of these that Jesus was asked to come to dinner. He went in and reclined on the couch, according to the Eastern custom, but without washing his hands.

38. The Pharisee at once noted the omission, and clearly made remarks about it, which as a host he ought not to have done. Moreover, he failed to see a true prophet of God in the 'carpenter's son,' who had not been careful to wash his hands according to the ceremonial law of his race.

39. Jesus perceived the critical look of the Pharisee, perhaps overheard a whispered remark. Hence his rebuke was pointed and strong. Furthermore, he saw the opportunity of teaching an important truth. He spoke of the anxiety of many Pharisees to have their cups and plates clean, while they neglected to have their hearts clean and their characters pure. They would extort money from the poor and do many things which the moral law of Moses forbade them to do, while they were careful to keep the little ceremonies with great exactness.

40. Jesus by a searching question warned them to keep their hearts clean as well as their hands. The same God made the heart, who made the outward form, nor would he be content with outside show.

41. One easy way of showing the genuineness of the loving heart was to give alms kindly and after a real

prompting of human sympathy. A loving heart is usually a clean heart. It has so much to occupy it, that it cannot be the prey of the passions.

42. In this and the following verses are shown some of the ways in which many of the Pharisees were in the habit of making a brave outside show. They were very exact in giving tithes, that is tenth-parts, even of such pot-herbs as mint and cumin. They even disputed as to whether the tithe should be taken of the stem, as well as of the rest of the plant, while they forgot to be just and kind, thus forgetting love to God and their neighbour. Jesus said that they could do both, but they must do the second, even if they neglected the first.

43. They were not content, if they did not get the front seats in the synagogue during worship, just as some people expect the best places in churches and chapels to-day. They liked those who met them to greet them with a reverent bow in the market-place and to call them 'Father,' just as priests of all religions expect to be greeted by their parishioners. In other words, they cared rather for the admiration of men than to do their duty to men. They desired men to think them better than they were.

44. Thus they were like tombs in the ground, which had long been silted over with sand, so that men walked over them without knowing of their presence. It was desecration to walk over a tomb knowingly. Jesus says of these particular Pharisees, they so cunningly hid their real nature that men never found them out. Thus they were hypocrites, who acted the part of good men without living good lives. Such men are most dangerous. There are boys and girls like them, who will be the most mischievous in their classes and set the others in an uproar. Yet when the teacher turns round, they will look so demure that they are never suspected. Be straight and true, kind and unselfish.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Top-show. Do not neglect little courtesies, but never forget greater duties. Many fruiterers in our markets have sixpenny baskets of strawberries during the season. If the baskets be judged from the top layer of fruit, their contents will be thought to be magnificent. But the top layer consists of what are sometimes called 'toppers.' The best fruit is put on the top, while smaller berries fill the rest of the basket. Indeed, the strawberries grow smaller the further down they are set. So buyers, who are inexperienced and expect something different, are deceived. That is the way with some men and women, with some boys and girls. They are good 'window-dressers,' who 'put all their goods in their shop windows.' They show a fair outside to those about them, while often enough they are in reality mean, sordid, and selfish.

When people are hunting about to buy old oak furniture, they often pay a great price for what they believe to be genuine articles. But when they get them home and begin to examine them carefully, they find that the oak which was said to be so old is in fact quite modern. The very worm-holes, which might be supposed to have come with age, have been made by a shot-gun or a sprig-bit. So the pieces of furniture are not what their sellers have asserted them to be. There are boys and girls of that kind, whom their fathers and mothers believe to be saints, who are just the most mischievous and sometimes the wickedest in a school. They ought to be sound and not to make a top-show unless they are the same throughout. Some boys and girls are delightful, when they go out to a party; but when they come home they 'hang the fiddle on the door-latch,' as it is said; that is, they are surly and selfish. They ought to be just as kind and bright at home as when they are away from home.

Æsop the Greek slave tells a good story of a jackdaw, which was dissatisfied with its plain appearance as a jackdaw. So it went amongst the peacocks and tricked itself out with their moulted feathers. But the peacocks were not long in finding out the cheat and in driving it away from them. It is better to be an honest jackdaw than a faked peacock. We can never deceive the real peacock, and we make a base show of ourselves if we try. It is like actors and sham jewellery. They think that no one can perceive the tinsel which they would pass off for gold and gems. Yet discerning spectators find out the deception soon enough.

In the county of Cambridge there are still left a few fens, which are drained by deep, broad ditches known as 'rhines.' It is quite easy to cross them by jumping with a pole. But the wary jumper will take care that his pole is good and sound. A young naturalist wanted to leap over a broad rhine of this kind, and he tried to do it with an elder-pole. It looked sound and secure on the outside; but inwardly its pith was soft and spongy and occupied much of the pole. Hence it broke when he was in mid-air, and he fell with a huge splash into the middle of the ditch, to the discomfiture of innocent frogs. The elder-pole is like some characters, which outwardly are sound enough, until we come to lean upon them, when they forthwith give way. Boys and girls must take care to be what they seem. Pretence never pays in the long run. It is dishonest, and when it is once found out, the pretender is never trusted again. The simplest course is the honest course. Boys and girls must do their best to be real and honest. They must not walk about in borrowed plumes: they must not pretend to be what they are not. This does not mean that they need be rough and unkind, discourteous and selfish. It does not mean that they have the right to wound others with what are sometimes called 'frank words.'

It means that they must try to be good and kind, never attempting to be above their station, but being what all can be if they only will be—kind and considerate gentlemen and gentlewomen. Remember that the black coat does not make the gentleman, nor the fine costume the gentlewoman. It is the gentle heart and gentle will, which all can cultivate, which make God's true gentlefolks, who are 'the salt of the earth' and the 'light of the world.'

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. The character of 'Mr. Pecksniff' in Dickens's 'Martin Chuzzlewit.'
2. 'Jane Eyre,' Chapter vii., where Mr. Brocklehurst denounces taste in dress and his wife and daughter come in most expensively dressed.
3. See also 'Becky Sharp' in Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair.'

Lesson XXIV

HYPOCRISY

Luke xi. 53–xii. 3

(53) And when he was come out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to set themselves vehemently against him, and to provoke him to speak of many things; (54) lying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth. (XII. 1) In the meantime, when many thousands of the multitude were gathered together, insomuch as they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (2) But there is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. (3) Wherefore, whatsoever ye have said in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Point of the Lesson. This lesson follows naturally upon the preceding one and extends its meaning. Hypocrisy is derived from the Greek word usually applied to an actor, who spoke through a large mask and pretended to be something which he was not. So it comes to mean 'pretending to be something which we are not.' To do this is to do great wrong. We should be always true in word, in thought, and in deed.

53–54. The scribes and Pharisees, whom Jesus was addressing upon this occasion, were 'hypocrites' in this. They crowded round Jesus and his disciples, pretending to be greatly interested in what he was teach-

ing, while they were trying to tempt him to say something which would bring down upon him the anger of the people. They were fond of outside show, exact in trifling duties, negligent of more important ones. Hence the people thought them better than they were and admired them greatly. They are not the only ones who do this kind of thing. There are many to-day who try to make others think them better than they are. There are boys and girls, who pretend to be very attentive, when the teacher's eye is upon them, yet who are in fact the causes of inattention on the part of their school-fellows. These are hypocrites. Let boys and girls remember never to pretend to be what they are not. Let them be single-hearted and true.

XII. 1. The wonderful teaching of Jesus caused great crowds to come and hear him. The phrase 'many thousands,' or 'myriads,' is no doubt exaggerated; it simply means great numbers. He spoke in the open air, where it is not so easy to hear as in a building; hence the multitude jostled one another in their eagerness to get near the Teacher. That is what happens in most crowds. His disciples kept close to him, and he began to address his teaching to them first. He intended them to teach others; that is why he spoke first of all to them. Seeing the mischievous intention of the scribes and Pharisees, he told his chosen friends to beware of their 'leaven which is hypocrisy.' The 'leaven' is what we call barm, which makes the dough rise by spreading through it, so that it can be baked into good and wholesome bread. The point which Jesus makes here is this—'Just as the leaven spreads throughout the lump of dough,' so does the character spread through the whole man and his life. The 'leaven of the Pharisees' was 'hypocrisy,' which showed itself throughout their lives and teaching. They spoke and lived to win the praise of men, while they carefully concealed their real faults

from men, so that they might pass for faultless. No doubt there were good Pharisees. Those of whom Jesus was speaking were not true to themselves.

2. He proceeded to say, such attempts at concealing the real character were vain in the end. However carefully the faults might be covered up, they would be found out in time. Boys and girls often do many little wrongs, saying these will never be found out. God knows and sees them the moment they are done. Sooner or later others will see and know them too. When once the barm has been put into the dough its effect cannot be hidden long. If the character of boys and girls is not good, it will not fail to show itself in their lives.

3. The Eastern houses had certain quiet and secret rooms, inner chambers, wherein the master of the house could make up his accounts, from which he excluded all but his most intimate friends. The roofs of the houses were flat. Sometimes a garden was planted upon them, where the master and his family could rest during the heat of the day under awnings. Furthermore, often enough when something was to be proclaimed so that many could hear it, it was proclaimed from the housetop. Then all the passers-by and dwellers in the street would hear it. So Jesus said, 'The secrets spoken in the darkness and silence of night would soon come to be revealed in the broad daylight. The sins of the night would be found out in the morning. The secrets told in the secret chamber would also come to be known everywhere.' Thus a bad character, however long it may be hidden from men, will sooner or later be found out. God has seen it and spoken his reproof in the conscience. Such hypocrites are always haunted with a fear of being found out in their real nature. The lesson is quite plain: be good, do not merely seem to be good. If boys and girls will remember this short sentence, they will save others and themselves many troubles, and grow up to

be good and useful men and women, leading simple and honest lives.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Beware of Hypocrisy. In Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' when Christian and Hopeful were on their way to the Celestial City, they met a 'black man clothed in white garments' like an angel of light. They were deceived by his white robes and listened to his false teaching. So he was able to lead them out of their way into a place where they were caught in the meshes of a strong net. It was better to be deceived than to deceive, but the two pilgrims met with severe punishment for their unwisdom. In like manner there are boys and girls who are fond of leading others into mischief and leaving them to shift for themselves. They say, 'It is grand to do wrong'; moreover, they try to make out that wrong is not wrong, while they themselves sometimes at least pretend to be good when they are not good.

That is what we must not do. We want our characters to be good and true. We must not therefore pretend to be good, when we are really bad. We must not of course be bad: we must be good. That is what God our Father expects of us, and what we can be, if we will faithfully try to do his will. In the large garden of an old country parsonage was a tall row of fine willow-trees, which looked as if they could endure the stress of the storms of a hundred years. Their rugged trunks were thick and solid-looking, while their branches were sturdy. But one night there came a great wind-storm, and all of the willows were broken and cast down on to the ground. When they were examined, it was found that the trunks were eaten away by the caterpillars of the hornet moth. That is a moth which looks like a great wasp, the caterpillars of which eat up the wood of the tree upon which they feed. So these willows, which

looked so sound and strong, were in reality weak and fell at the first great storm. That is just what a bad character does for us. People who do not know us well, think how good and true we are; but when the first serious trouble comes upon us we fall, and our bad character is found out.

On the contrary we may go into the woods and look at some noble oak-tree. It has been slow in growing to its maturity, perhaps a hundred years. But its wood is usually too tough for any such caterpillar to pierce. Hence the tree is able to stand the fury of the storms of a thousand years. Such is a good character. There is no pretence about it, while it is too strong to suffer little faults to weaken its strength. Boys and girls should try to grow up to be as sturdy as the oak. Making no pretence, they should conquer their faults day by day. Then none will be able to call them hypocrites and many will live to bless their lives.

In an old book is the picture of a terribly ugly demon dressed up in fine satin clothes. It is called 'Sin in satins.' That is just what hypocrites are, fair to look at but evil to deal with in daily life. In Shakespeare's comedy of 'Measure for Measure,' Angelo the Duke's deputy is thought by all to be a somewhat severe moralist. Hence the Duke has made him his deputy, while he walks disguised amongst his subjects. But Angelo, when he has the power, shows his real character and proves to be an unjust and vicious rascal of the basest kind. But in the end his baseness came to light and he was deposed from his government. There are many such men in public life, who pretend to take a deep interest in the welfare of others, when they are really working for their own profit. So in private life there are such men and women, whom boys and girls must avoid imitating. Few faults are more dangerous than hypocrisy. It deceives others for a time, till in the end the hypocrite

begins to deceive himself. It will go ill with boys and girls if they deceive others. They will be found out at last and never trusted again. In a northern town a certain house had to be built up three times in succession after three successive storms, because it had not sound foundations and because its walls and roof were built for show and not for strength. We must take care not to build up our character in this way. We must make it good and sound, building it up by one good deed at a time faithfully done. If boys and girls build up such a character, it will last them through the storms and trials of life. That is what their fathers and mothers want them to do. That is what God our Father wants us to do. Let them avoid hypocrisy and grow better every day, and at the same time they will lead the happiest lives possible on earth.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. In Shakespeare's great tragedy of 'Othello' the terrible character of Iago works out his revenge upon Othello by pretending to be a faithful and blunt friend, when he is really acting a vile part.

2. In Kingsley's 'Two years ago' Grace Harvey's mother is a professing Christian, while in reality she has stolen Tom Thurnall's belt containing his money. She is found out and dies of fright almost. See especially Chapter xxvi.

3. See Bonar's fine hymn 'He liveth long, who liveth well.' No. 263 in the Essex Hall Hymnal Revised.

Lesson XXV

BEWARE OF GREED

Luke xii. 13–21

(13) And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. (14) But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? (15) And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. (16) And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; (17) and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? (18) And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. (19) And I will say to my life, Life, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. (20) But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy life required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? (21) So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Point of the Lesson. A man in the crowd wished Jesus to interfere between him and his brother and to help him to a part of the property of his dead father. Clearly there was something eagerly selfish in his manner of putting forth his plea. Hence Jesus with some sternness refused to aid him. Moreover, he used his example to point a lesson against greed. Boys and girls need to take earnest care not to be greedy in any sense of that word: they should learn to be unselfish and kind.

13. The crowd was gathered round Jesus in thrilling expectation to hear his words teaching the true life, when a man anxious simply for his own interest, asked him to help him in a quarrel with his brother for the inheritance left by their father. He thought that a word from the great Teacher would serve his turn. He had not realized that Jesus was born into the world to wean men from its selfishness and greed, to lead them to a true and happy life.

14. Hence the answer of Jesus was not a little severe : ' I am no settler of such private disputes,' was his answer, ' I would have you rich toward God.' In other words, ' I would have you to love and serve God ; then you will have a wealth which no one will be able to take away from you.'

15. The Master went on to enforce a lesson against covetousness, which is only a longer word for what we call ' greed.' There are boys and girls who want all the best about them. They see others with something good, and straightway they want it and begin to clamour for it. If they have a chance, they will keep the best things to themselves. They do not know the delight of a generous heart. They grow up into curmudgeons and never understand the real sweetness of life. We must learn to take earnest care not to imitate such.

16–18. Following his frequent custom, Jesus told a little story to express his meaning more clearly. A rich landowner had some good land, which one year brought him an abundant store of corn and grapes and olives and similar fruits, so that he had enough to last him for many years. His barns were not big enough to hold the produce of his land. So he pondered within himself what to do. He seems never to have cast a thought upon anyone but himself. Of his poor neighbours at least he never thought at all, and so proved himself to be no good Jew. His only thought was to

build bigger barns and to store up his abundance for himself.

19. When he had made up his mind to do this, he still thought of himself alone. He said to himself, 'Life, thou hast many goods, enough indeed to feed thee for many years. Be easy, eat, drink, be merry.' His own pleasure and his own profit were his only care. He was too greedy to think for a moment of helping others. He thought of spending an idle time for the rest of his days, or at least so long as his provisions lasted. So he was meanly greedy, and he received his punishment.

20. God said to his heart, 'Thou foolish man, to-night thy life shall be taken away from thee. What benefit wilt thou have then from all thy stores? Will they not belong to another?' It is quite certain that, even had he lived, the rich man would have benefited little in any true sense from his wealth, since he used it only to minister to his selfish pleasures. If he had given much of it to feed the poor, he would have laid up treasure in heaven and much happiness on earth. Jesus says elsewhere with profound truth, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Those who have tried both, know the wisdom of the saying. The more the gift costs, the happier is the giver.

21. This verse teaches us to be 'rich toward God.' This we achieve by being kind to one another. Boys and girls cannot learn the lesson of being generous too early. They need not take the biggest piece of cake or the largest apple or orange. Nor if they have something good need they try to keep it all to themselves. They will get far more real pleasure from sharing it with others. Of course, we must not give away what is not ours, as many unreflecting yet kindly men will do. Oliver Goldsmith owed his tailor much money, and yet gave a guinea to a poor woman who came begging to him. He really gave

his tailor's money, since he owed it to him. But boys and girls must learn to give help and harmless pleasure when they can: so will they be 'rich toward God.'

ILLUSTRATIONS

Beware of Greed. In olden times there is said to have lived on an island in the Rhine a wealthy bishop named Hatto. On the island was a strong tower, while there was land enough to produce good crops. So, though he had an estate on the mainland, he was never in want. Nay, he took care to store up in his tower abundance of corn in case of need. Suddenly a great famine arose in the surrounding land of Germany, where his estate lay and over which he was bishop. The poor people, whom he ought to have helped out of his own plenty, came to him begging piteously for assistance, while he sat in his great palace on the mainland. His answer was hard and cruel, since his soul was mean and greedy. 'Let them die,' he exclaimed to his toadies around him; 'they are only the rats which devour the corn.' As bishop he was in duty bound to go in want himself rather than the people committed to his care. His savage answer aroused so much anger amongst the starving poor, that he retired for safety to his strong tower on the island. When he was there dwelling in fancied security, one of his servants rushed into the banqueting-hall, white with terror, to tell him that a great army of rats was coming towards him down the bank of the Rhine. He smiled, and bidding his servants pull up the drawbridge, imagined himself to be perfectly safe. By and by another servant rushed in, no less terrified, to tell him that the rats were swimming over the river in thousands. Lastly he saw the cat with eyes wide open with terror and screaming loudly. Then his cruel words to the poor struck his conscience, and the greedy bishop began to quake with fear. His servants all fled for their lives,

leaving him to face the swimming army of rats. They landed on the island, they climbed up the walls, they found their way to his bedchamber, where he lay huddled up, shaking with terror. They attacked him and ate him up all save his bones. So the greedy bishop perished because of his greed. He might have done much to help the poor, whose bishop he was, for whom he ought to have done his best to provide. That is an old legend which the boatman loves to tell the traveller, as he glides by Bishop Hatto's tower. It can teach a sound lesson to all of us, not to be greedy, but to help others when we can and to the best of our power.

There are some boys and girls who never think of other boys and girls, who may actually need more than they themselves wantonly throw away. There are others who will share their last crust with the needy. Amongst the poor rooms in East London lived two lads. The one was always kind and thoughtful, though he had little enough to give. Whenever he saw a lost child, he would always try to take it home, while he would give it part of his own hard-earned dinner. He had much to do to keep his bedridden mother, and to find her some of those small luxuries which are good for sick folks. But there was never a happier lad in all the vast wilderness of the great city. His brother was in every way greedy and selfish. He could not spare so much as a bite of a crust to feed a hungry child. He never did anything towards the care of his mother. He did not save anything of what he earned. He spent it upon himself in the cheap music hall, or in some such kind of amusement. He was never happy, since he was wasting his life by thinking of himself alone. We have only one life on earth, and we ought to make the best of it. Some men try to get up in life by treading others down. Of this kind are some millionaires, whom others are foolish enough to envy. They may gain their end of being far

too rich. But they have no true peace and consequently no real happiness. Happier far than one such was the crossing-sweeper, who worked from morning till night close to the millionaire's gorgeous office. He earned very little: yet he was able to send his younger brother and sister to school, so as to give them a better chance in life than had fallen to him. By degrees this same crossing-sweeper just earned enough to keep him comfortably in his old age. Yet he loved his corner, and would go down there every day, always giving back a halfpenny out of every penny which he received. He had the pride of seeing his brother and sister do well in life owing to his unselfishness: nor were they ever ashamed of him, though he continued to sweep his crossing. Boys and girls should learn from the beginning never to be greedy. They can find many opportunities of doing little kindnesses, if they will look for them. They can be loving and thoughtful to their father and mother and to many others. Then will they be 'rich toward God' and their lives will be filled with sunshine.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. The story of 'The Three Trouts' in Henry Brook's 'Fool of Quality.'

2. See Dickens's 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' Chapter xi., where Jonas Chuzzlewit is so greedy of his father's wealth that he wishes his father dead.

Lesson XXVI

THE BARREN FIG TREE

Luke xiii. 6–9

(6) And he spake this parable: A certain rich man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. (7) And he said unto the vine-dresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground? (8) And he answering saith unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it: (9) and if it bear fruit thenceforth, *well*; but if not, thou shalt cut it down.

Point of the Lesson. This parable teaches us the need of laying hold of all opportunities of learning anything good and useful, especially of learning how to live good lives. If we do not use these we shall be like the barren fig tree, which no previous efforts of the gardener had made fruitful. So shall we waste our lives and reap certain punishment, until we learn to do and to be better.

6. The vineyard was an enclosure, often with a broad ditch as a fence, sometimes surrounded by a wall, and usually containing a winepress and a tower, wherein a watchman was set to see that thieves did not carry off bunches of the grapes. Anyone passing through such a vineyard was at liberty to eat a few of the grapes, so long as he did not carry off a bunch in his bosom. Sometimes amongst the vines there would be room for a fig tree or two. These may have been of the choicest kind, bearing a fruit not as we see it, flat and brown, but

almost pear-shaped and of a deep purple hue when it was ripe. The fig tree in the parable certainly ought to have borne fruit in the second or third year of its planting. But the owner of the vineyard came year by year looking in vain. It may be noted in passing, that fruit was a needful variant to the bread and meat diet of the average Jew.

7. The vine-dresser had to go round the vineyard to take off the superfluous leaves of the vines, so that the grapes might have a chance of ripening. He had also to thin off a number of bunches, so that the remaining bunches might grow larger and better. Finally he had to thin off some of the grapes from each bunch, so that the remainder might grow bigger and more luscious. In the earlier part of the year it was his work to train the vines around their supports, and to take care that they were watered and well manured. On him therefore in the main the responsibility for the success of the grape harvest rested. It was to him that the owner came with his complaints about the unfruitfulness of the fig tree. He had been three years seeking for fruit and finding none. 'Cut down the tree,' he said to the vine-dresser, 'why should it cumber the ground?'

8. The vine-dresser did not like to think that his careful labour had been thrown away. He may too have been sorry for the tree, which had been the object of his attention for three years. He therefore begged the owner to allow him another chance with the tree, to see if he could not by manuring it produce the desired results. N.B.—The word 'Lord' here as often means nothing more than our 'Sir,' and has not the same meaning as the same word in the Greek bears, when it is referred to God. This second meaning it never has, when referred to Jesus in the Gospels.

9. The vine-dresser was still hopeful, and his example may teach us the lesson never to give up helping one who

seems to mock all our efforts. Sometimes the teacher may get a boy or girl, who seems to care to listen to no word which is being uttered. That teacher needs some of the patience of the vine-dresser. He may have to wait long for any result; but he should never give up hope. A time may come when he will reap the reward of his painstaking trouble. Patience is needed here, as everywhere in life. So boys and girls may give a helping hand or at least utter a word of warning to a companion who is going wrong. They need to be very patient, which is hard for them; they need to take care not to be led into wrong themselves. But it is worth their while to try to save their former friend if they can. The whole meaning of this little parable may be divided into these two parts: the patience of the vine-dresser, and the need for every one of us to use all our opportunities of doing good. We must try to bring forth the fruit of good characters, showing itself in loving deeds and kind words. We have many opportunities of education and of forming our characters. Amongst these are the Church and Sunday School. If we neglect them, we are both foolish and sinful. Jesus has both taught and shown us how to live. God our Father is wondrously patient with us. But he expects us to use such opportunities as are ours to learn what it means to be his children, and how to act as such. Punishment comes to all careless people, no less than to wilful sinners. May we remember to try our utmost to bring forth the sweet fruit of kind, loving, and unselfish lives. So shall we be happy for the most part and at all times filled with the peace of God.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Using Opportunities. Boys and girls, while they are young, are apt to forget that one day they will grow up into men and women. Wordsworth says most wisely,

'The child is father of the man.' By this he means that during childhood we are forming those characters which will be ours when we are men and women. If we are idle and worthless as children, we shall be likely to be idle and worthless men and women. There are some quite old men who can neither read nor write. Why is that, and how has it come about? Sometimes it is due to the selfishness of their fathers and mothers. But more often it is because they have neglected the opportunities of the night school in their boyhood and girlhood. What applies to the training of the mind, applies no less to the training of the character. If we learn to lie as children, we shall grow up untruthful. We need, therefore, to be careful when we are young to use our opportunities of being good and true and loving. If we do not train the body, we shall lose much of the use of it. Lazy people, who lie too long in bed, are not likely to become athletic, or even healthy. If we choose to keep the arm always in one position for a year, like the Indian fakir, we shall come to lose the use of it. In like manner the boys and girls who lose their opportunities will never find them again. How is it that there are so many men and women ignorant of the name of the simplest flower which they meet in their walks? It is simply because they have not taken the trouble to learn it while they were young. Why is it that there are so many men and women ignorant of the simplest laws of health? The answer is similar: it is because they have not taken the trouble to study them, while they were at school. Yet they would have lived more healthily and more happily, if they had taken a very small amount of trouble.

In a garden in the West of England grew a fine specimen of that kind of American Aloe commonly known as 'Adam's Needle,' because its leaves are like a number of broad, flat, and sharp-pointed needles coming from

a centre. It had been in the garden for many years without ever showing any signs of flowering. But during that time it had been growing accustomed to the variations of the English climate and to the eccentricities of the English weather. When it may have been about fifty years old, there came an unusually hot summer, when it put forth a tall stem covered with beautiful blossoms. That aloe had not been idling away its time; it had been preparing carefully for its season of flowering. It had used the nourishment of the soil, air, and rain until it was ready to blossom. So boys and girls who use the opportunities of home life, school, and pleasant comradeship, will in time bring forth the fair blossom of a fine character.

By the same plant seeds were formed by the flowers, so that its functions as a plant were fulfilled. Just as it is the function of the apple-tree to bring forth apples, it is the function of every plant to produce seed, which is the fruit of that plant. That aloe may be a lesson to all boys and girls of the need of using every opportunity of growing up into good and noble men and women. They must be patient, listening to what their teachers tell them and acting upon it where they can. Above all they have to learn to love and imitate Jesus the Christ in his perfect self-denial and to obey his holy words. At first they will not see the use of this hard task. But while they are young they must perforce take much upon trust. When they grow older they will find the priceless blessing of having learned to be good, true, and loving. They will learn to know the continual presence of the loving Father of all. Then by degrees they will bring forth 'the white flower of a blameless life.' They may be long in blooming; but like that aloe in that old Somersetshire garden, when their season for flowering does come, the blossoms will be beautiful beyond all telling.

An example of the contrary may be given. In a northern garden was a greengage plum-tree of an excellent kind, but which brought forth little or no fruit. It grew plenty of leaves and branches with a few blossoms, and that was all. When it was cut down it was found to have a great single tap-root, which sucked up the nourishment of the ground, but yielded no fruit. Such are those who are selfish. They ruin their nature and yield no sound fruit. Let boys and girls be like the aloe, using every opportunity, and they will bring forth both the flowers and fruit of goodness and peace.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Frances E. Cooke's 'Noble Workers,' and 'Story of Theodore Parker.'
2. 'Memorable Unitarians,' under W. H. Prescott, pp. 363–67.
3. In Thackeray's 'Newcomes' see the character of J. J. Ridley the artist, who never lost an opportunity of perfecting himself in his art.

Lesson XXVII

THE TEST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Luke xiii. 25–30

(25) When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; (26) then shall ye begin to say, We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets; (27) and he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. (28) There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without. (29) And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. (30) And behold there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

Point of the Lesson. These verses may be directed against the Jews who refused to listen to Jesus. They may also refer to those careless people who live in the midst of opportunities for good service without taking advantage of them. Those who are not good will not find 'the kingdom of God.' Many might say to Jesus, 'Did we not often eat and drink with you, did we not often hear you teach?' They might have done all this and neither appreciated the mission of Jesus nor followed his teaching. Christian work is the true test of Christian discipleship, Christian work which is prompted by a Christian character. Boys and girls must not merely hear, they must do good.

25. When the door of an Eastern house was once shut at night, it was not readily opened. There was always the fear that ill-luck, to say nothing of evil spirits, might enter. The people mentioned in this verse might easily have come to see the master of the house before the door was shut. But they preferred to follow their own pleasure. Then when they felt the chill night-damp upon them, they wanted to come in. To them the chilling answer was uttered, 'I know you not, why should I open the door to you?'

26. Those outside began to say how well they had known the Master, while he was working in their town. They might have been at the same table with him, they had certainly heard him teach. Hence they claimed to come in out of the dark and cold. The question was not, whether they had seen or heard him, but had they tried to follow him. If they had done this, he would have known them.

27. As it was, he had not known them. While he was teaching in their town, they had been doing their ordinary careless and sinful deeds, never thinking of him or of his teaching, until it was too late. Hence his stern answer was, 'Depart from me, ye workers of wickedness.'

28–29. These two verses would seem to refer directly to the Jews who rejected the Christ and so had no part in his kingdom. Jesus, as often, uses a figure of speech. He pictures the gathering of the faithful with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the great ancestors of the Hebrew race, along with the prophet-preachers who had tried to help their people in the heavenly kingdom, while his own countrymen were cast out because they had not used the opportunity of seeking it, while he was teaching them. They were proud of their ancestors, proud of their prophets, one of whom he was though greater than all. So they were condemned to the sadness of repentance for not having received him and attended to his message.

Jesus pursued the figure. Men and women would be gathered in from the whole world, who had not the advantages of the pure and beautiful Jewish religion as taught by their prophet-preachers, while they themselves would be outside. It was not enough to see and hear him. They must become disciples. Of every disciple it is required that, according to his powers, he 'must be as his Master.' There are many, nay, countless thousands, calling themselves Christians, and belonging to nations which are called Christian, yet who will not follow their Master. He teaches through his faithful disciples in our streets to-day. His example is left not to be praised but to be followed. Yet how many listen to the teaching or follow the example? Savage wars are fought by those who call themselves disciples of 'the Prince of peace.' These same so-called disciples cheat one another, slander one another, and lead selfish lives. The one test of discipleship is the true character showing itself in true and loving thoughts, words, and works. Long repentance is laid up for those who fail to fulfil, or at least honestly try to fulfil, this searching test.

30. Turning to the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said unto them, 'You have had the first opportunities of being good and following my teaching. You have not used these and you have not listened to me. So you will be last in the 'kingdom of God.' Boys and girls who want to lead true lives must learn to be disciples of Jesus from the beginning. The law of their lives must be unselfishness, and the word of their mouths truth and kindness.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The test of Discipleship. In a certain home the father was good and true, doing his duty firmly and kindly by his children. The mother was what all mothers ought

to be and so often are, the 'angel of the house.' There were several children, upon each of whom the father and mother lavished equal love and care. They taught them what to do and showed them an example of how to do it. They took care to give their children the best education in their power at the day school and evening school. They led them, they did not simply send them to the Church and Sunday School. Yet there was one boy, who cared little for their teaching, who took all their self-denial as his due. They took especial pains with him, but their trouble was thrown away. When he was at school he spent his time in doing his utmost to learn as little as possible. He disturbed the class, he was a torment to his teachers. He was beaten more than once, but that only made him worse. When he was punished for his own wrongdoing, he was always aggrieved and thought that some one was putting upon him. He would say that he 'meant to have a good time at school.' If you had asked him what he meant by a good time, you would have found that he meant a worthless, idle, and selfish time. He was the dunce of his class and the terror of the younger children, whom he would bully and torture whenever he had an opportunity. He would rob them of their precious playthings, and break such as were of no use to him. In short, he was a thoroughly bad boy, who refused to profit by the loving care of his father and mother. He would get others to do his lessons for him; so when he left school he could barely read, and he could not write much more than his own name. He never thought of the future when he would have to earn his living by his own work. He expected his father and mother to keep him without work. He never thought of helping them, when they grew too old to work, which was his duty. When he was apprenticed to a trade, he continued to waste his time and that of his employer. He would not try to learn anything: he

was always the last to reach his work and the first to leave it. He was soon turned out of his apprenticeship to make way for a better. But he still determined, as he said, to have a 'good time.' He wasted all his leisure in drinking and gambling; every year he sank lower and lower, and in having his 'good time' he almost broke his father's and his mother's heart. He became an unskilled labourer, who had had the opportunities of learning a good and well-paid trade. When he grew up, he was almost always amongst the numbers of the unemployed. He did not belong to the honest unemployed, who suffer not from their own fault, who earnestly long for work. He was one of the dishonest skulkers who are the discredit of their class. He found a woman foolish enough to marry him: he had a family, which was supported by his wife's work. He who had vowed to work for her, made her work for him, till worn out at length she left him. His last fate was well-deserved: he was sent to prison for housebreaking. There at least he had to work, and it was time. He who might have been a decent, honest working-man, living in comparative comfort, skulked through life a burden to others and with no real pleasure of his own. He had not realized that he was called to be a disciple of Jesus, as are all of us. That was the lesson taught him at home and in the Sunday School; but he shut his ears and his heart, and his end was jail.

That is an example drawn from life, of which there are too many in our land. Boys and girls must begin to realize in the beginning that life is sacred and that time cannot be wasted without immeasurable loss. They are called to learn to live honest, kindly, and helpful lives as children of a good and all-loving God, as followers of a perfect and self-denying man. Let them not neglect the opportunities which never come again. They must learn to prepare for the future, to be diligent and useful,

to be kind and to help one another. If there are idle and worthless rich people, there are also idle and worthless poor people. These usually find their way to the workhouse at last. No boy or girl would wish to do that. Let them begin while they are young to learn to love good and useful work. Let them cling to their church and school, and allow these to be the moving influence of their lives. Then they will win that true test of discipleship, a true character, and gain their own happiness in giving happiness to others.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Mrs. Gaskell's 'Life of Charlotte Brontë,' for the hard work and consecration of the sisters and the worthlessness of Branwell their brother.

2. For those who have been true disciples of Jesus, see 'Memorable Unitarians,' sub. 'John Pounds,' pp. 286–289; 'Mary Carpenter,' pp. 244–247; 'William Rathbone,' pp. 400–404.

3. Mrs. Hemans's 'Casabianca' and 'Pilgrim Fathers.'

Lesson XXVIII

STRENGTH TO DO DUTY

Luke xiii. 31–35

(31) In that very hour there came certain Pharisees, saying to him, Get thee out, and go hence: for Herod would fain kill thee. (32) And he said unto them, Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third *day* I am perfected. (33) Howbeit I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. (34) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen *gathereth* her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! (35) Behold, your house is left unto you *desolate*: and I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Point of the Lesson. Some of the Pharisees, moved by the teaching of Jesus, seem to have been anxious to save him from the threatened wrath of Herod Antipas. This prince was the tetrarch (or governor over a fourth part) of Galilee. Jesus answered with sublime courage, that whatever Herod intended to do, he himself must do his duty. That is a lesson for boys and girls. Jesus our Master did not shrink from the way of duty, though a horrible death lay at the end of it. We must do our duty, whatever comes and however hard it is.

31. The Pharisees were the popular sect amongst the Jews. They were most rigid in fulfilling the ceremonial part of the Jewish law, such as the washing of hands

before eating, absolute abstinence from work on the Sabbath (Saturday), and similar things. For the most part they were enemies of Jesus who had dared to teach another and a higher way of life. Those mentioned in this verse had some kindness towards Jesus, taking him to be a prophet: hence they warned him to flee from the wrath of Herod, who intended to kill him.

32. The answer of Jesus was strong and contemptuous of Herod, whom he compared to a cunning fox. 'Tell him,' he said in effect, 'that I must go on with the work which my Father has given me to do, so long as it is his will and until I be perfected by death.' 'The third day' has no reference here to the resurrection of Jesus. It is merely a familiar form of expressing the future, which was so soon to come to pass. It may be that he was three days' journey from Jerusalem, in which case he would go to meet his fate in that city on the 'third day.' Possibly the best meaning is that on the third day he would be on his way to finish his work at Jerusalem, as he had finished it in Galilee.

33. 'I must go on my way doing my duty, preaching and teaching,' he continues, 'where I am, until I must go to Jerusalem.' Jesus felt that he must preach in the chief city of his race, before his work was done. He implies that he was 'a prophet,' that is, a man inspired by God with a religious message to his people. With bitter irony he adds, 'A prophet cannot perish out of Jerusalem.' The history of his race was darkened by the story of the frequent murder of its prophets and teachers. Jesus knew that his teaching, which was opposed to the whole thought of the chiefs of his people, would surely bring him to death. He implies, too, that a true prophet must deliver his message in Jerusalem, though he should be put to death there.

34. Then with the warm heart of a true patriot, he thinks of the wrongdoing of the citizens of Jerusalem

in killing God's messengers to them. He breaks out into a burst of lyric poetry, inspired by intense love of his race. The words he uses are as homely as they are beautiful. We can see a hen gathering her chickens under her wings to keep them in safety at the risk of her life, when some enemy is near, or during the night. So Jesus longed to gather his people into the safety from sin, which his teaching would give them, if they would follow him.

35. Then he looked forward to the time, when the Holy City would be destroyed, as he foresaw it would be. When it was thrown down, and only the ruins of deserted houses were left, some who were left would perhaps remember him and regret that they had refused to listen to him. Then they would not be able to see him, until they recognized his divine mission to them and to others. That was his answer to those who out of kindness of heart sought to persuade him to shrink from doing the duty laid upon him by God his Father and ours. In other words, he said, 'Whatever that cunning fox Herod seeks to do to me, I cannot and I will not let that hinder me from going about and doing the work which God has given me to do. I am God's prophet, his inspired teacher. If I am to die, let me die in Jerusalem, where so many prophets of God have been slain before me.' That is a supreme lesson to boys and girls of all ages. Many try to prevent them from doing their duty, by telling them of dangers in the way. They must not listen to these, but try to do what they know is right and what those who are wiser than themselves tell them to do. Then will their characters grow in strength and beauty from year to year.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Let nothing keep you from doing your duty. Duty usually seems hard to do, and often enough is dangerous.

Yet it must be done, because it is God's will. If we are strong and true to our duty, though we may suffer some pain, we shall win peace and happiness.

Long ago, when Germany was divided up into a number of smaller states, each of them had a capital city, which was walled round, and where the government sat in state to do its proper work. One such city was built on the banks of a great river, which divided it into two parts. Many bridges crossed the stream, and a path along one of its banks led under one of the most ancient of these. It was a time when a mighty foreign army lay around the city, anxious to take it, to cast into prison its leading citizens, to say nothing of murdering and plundering the rest, when the soldiers had forced their entrance. But the city had a good store of food and strong walls, so that it was able to hold out, when there was no cannon worth calling a cannon. The townsfolk were very confident that they could hold out until their prince came home with his army to relieve them and to scatter the enemy. But inside the city was a nest of traitors, who would be glad to betray it, if they got a favourable opportunity.

As the night was falling and the stars were coming out in the sky, a boy of not more than twelve years of age was walking home along the river bank. He was a little frightened because he was young, and much of the walk was lonely. But it was his shortest way home, and he was determined to take it, that he might get there the sooner. He had to pass under the most ancient of the bridges, which was so built that it contained many recesses, one of which opened out on to the river bank. As he drew near the bridge, he felt sure that he saw some dark figures moving about. His heart leaped up to his mouth, for he knew that they had come upon no good errand. He waited trembling till he saw them move under the bridge. When he could see them no longer

he began to move cautiously homewards. He was terrified, and he could almost hear the beating of his heart. Just as he came to the bridge, to add to his terror he could hear voices whispering together, but not so low as to prevent him from hearing their words. He soon found that they were about evil work; so in spite of his cruel fear he felt that it was his duty to listen. He crept into the gloomy recess of the bridge and listened with all his might. He heard the men talking to one another of a plan of betraying the city into the hands of its enemies for a good sum of gold. He listened until he had heard the complete plan, which was to take place at midnight.

It was now four hours from that fatal time. What was he to do? He knew that it was his duty to inform the captain of the guard and the authorities of the city, and that at once. Yet the thought came into his mind, 'What if those wicked men should lay hold of me and kill me to save themselves?' He hesitated for a moment, when the thought flashed upon him 'What if they betray the city and I could have prevented them? I must go at once.' His way lay in the opposite direction, and he took off his shoes that he might run the more quietly. It was a long run to those who were in charge of the defence, and he was almost out of breath when he reached them. At first he could hardly get to the captain of the guard through the soldiers, who told him that he had been dreaming. But he refused to go without seeing him, and he was much relieved when that good officer came out by chance to where he was. Seeing the boy, he asked him what he wanted. The boy poured out his tale, telling the whole story of the plot and saying where he had overheard the traitors. The captain thanked him and sent him home, with a soldier to keep him company. At midnight when the time came for the plot to be worked out, instead of the city being

betrayed to the enemy, six traitors were hung outside over the walls, that the enemy might see how their treachery had brought ruin upon themselves. So that brave boy put his life into his hand to do his duty.

In that all boys and girls are called to imitate him, listening neither to fear nor to temptation. Then will they grow in grace as they grow in years, and be a joy to others and at peace with themselves.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See the story of 'The Seven Bishops' in Green's 'Short History of the English People.'
2. See Macaulay's Lay of 'Horatius' who did his duty and 'kept the bridge in the brave days of old.'
3. Whittier's ballad of 'Cassandra Southwick' will also serve as an illustration.

Lesson XXIX

THE CHIEF SEATS

Luke xiv. 7–11

(7) And he spake a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats ; saying unto them, (8) When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat, lest haply a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, (9) and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place ; and then thou shall begin with shame to take the lowest place. (10) But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place ; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher : then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. (11) For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Point of the Lesson. There are some boys and girls who are never content unless they have a front seat everywhere. They push their way before those who are better than themselves. Hence they have to be brought back and to give way to others. The true mind to have is the lowly mind. It is good and right to be quick to see and recognize the merits of others, and to have a modest estimate of our own. We lose much by self-conceit and false pride ; we gain much by true modesty.

7. Jesus noticed in a house into which he was going to dinner, that the guests did their best to push their way to the front seats. These ' seats ' were not like our chairs and stools. They consisted of thick cushions, on which the guests did not sit, but reclined leaning upon one

elbow. ' The chief seats ' were those nearest to the host. The table or tables were as low as the couches, so that it was easy to reach over and to take what was wanted.

8. ' The chief seat ' would be that on the right hand of the host, which was usually reserved for the principal guest. Some officious and less important guest, filled with his own self-conceit, would be sure to try to push himself into a place which was not intended for him.

9. Jesus bids the guests not to seek the first places, but to sit modestly in some that were not so good. It often happened to one who had planted himself in the best place, that a more distinguished guest than himself came into the room. Then the host would have to ask him to remove and to make way for this guest. That would be pleasant neither to the host, nor to the one asked to take a lower seat. The latter would be so ashamed of himself, that he would remove to the very lowest possible place at the dinner.

10. Jesus went on to give wise advice to those asked to dinner. Let them, he said, not push themselves into the very front seats, but let them take a less conspicuous place. Then the man who gave the dinner would be able to say to them, ' Come a little nearer to me, to a better place.' That was a far pleasanter experience than to be sent down to a lower place. Boys and girls must learn the lesson not to be too eager for the best places always at entertainments or elsewhere. They must be content with worse places, if they do not want to be sent lower down. At a big dinner in a northern town certain seats were reserved for the Christmas Mummers. Everybody else had left these seats for their purpose. A young man and his friends came in too late, when very few good seats were left. Filled with his own self-importance, he at once took his friends to these reserved seats, and with gross impertinence sat in them. He and his friends had to be told that those

seats were reserved for others, and that they could not have them. He was not pleased; but his impertinence received a well-merited snub.

11. Those who lift themselves up presumptuously above others are always brought down in the long run; whereas modest people may have to wait some time for the recognition of their merits, but it comes at last. Remember that Jesus does not mean 'umbleness' of the type of Uriah Heep in Dickens's 'David Copperfield,' which was merely grovelling for a time, until by wicked means he attained a position of power from which he was soon brought low and found his way into jail for forgery. Humility of the true kind means a modesty which seeks not its own glory or its own praise. Such a modesty had Alfred the Great, who will always be known as 'the Great' in our history. Far different was Richard II, who was vain and conceited, and who lost his throne and his life. Such a modesty was that of Charles Darwin, one of the greatest men not only of England but of the world. Boys and girls must learn not to be puffed up by their cleverness, their fine clothes, or by anything of the kind. They must learn to move through life modestly, giving others full credit for their cleverness or kindness, and seeking no credit for themselves. Then will credit come to them, and they will be loved and honoured when they grow older.

ILLUSTRATIONS

True Humility. It has been truly said that 'empty vessels make the most sound.' It is not a sign of cleverness or goodness to boast of either. The greatest men are usually the lowliest: their goodness and their greatness shine through them. In a little town a girl was once heard to boast, 'I am well known to be the handsomest girl in the town.' She was fitly punished, when she overheard a caustic elder asking, 'Who is that over-

dressed and rather pretty girl?' An Eastern sage uttered much truth when he told his old-world fable. He said: Once a fly sat swinging on the leaf of a great oak, and he said to himself, 'What a fine fly am I. Here is this great oak made on purpose for me to rest upon, while the wind is blowing on purpose to swing me in the sunshine. The sun itself is shining, that my wings may look prettier and that my body may be warmed.' The summer came to an end, and the fly hung shrivelled and dead on a twig of the tree. But the wind blew often enough in the winter, the sun shone upon the sparkling snow, and the great oak lasted for many generations, seeing many generations of flies born and dying. That is the way with some boys and girls. They think that they confer a favour upon the Sunday School by coming to it, or upon the Church by worshipping in it. It is they themselves who, if they will, may derive supreme benefit from both: it would be well for them to come to both modestly and learn how to live.

Once a little girl was heard to say, 'Isn't daddie good? See what a nice house he has built for me.' She had six brothers and sisters, yet she thought of herself as of more importance than all of them taken together, to say nothing of her father and mother. Her mother said quietly to her, 'Father built this house before he knew that you would be born.' Then the little maid began to see that she was not the only one in the family, and that the others were just as dear to her parents as she herself was. So she learned a lesson of modesty at an early age, which she never forgot throughout her life.

There was once a dispute amongst the birds as to which of them should be king. All of them except the tiny wren voted for the eagle. The wren said, 'Not so; the eagle is no king for me; I can fly higher than the eagle.' The other birds laughed, but the wise raven said, 'Very well, you shall have a flying match with the eagle.'

The great eagle with his huge wings soared upwards as high as he could go. Then the little wren, which had nestled unperceived upon his broad back, took a little flight and went higher than the eagle. The rest of the birds called him their king; but they called him so in mockery of his trickery and vanity.

There are boys and girls as fussy as sparrows, which are never easy unless they are calling attention to themselves. Some again are like peacocks. The peacock has a lovely tail, of which it is very proud. When anyone comes to look at the bird, it spreads out its tail and struts along as if it were the most useful bird on earth. Hence we say of some one, 'He's as proud as a peacock.' Never let that be said of any boys or girls in this school: let them be modest and do their work in and for the school without ever boasting about it.

In Homer's 'Iliad,' which tells the story of the siege of Troy by the Greeks, there is a braggart named Thersites. He was meanly shaped, a coward, and ignoble. Yet he was always pushing himself to the front in the councils of war and upon every possible occasion, except where real fighting was to be done. He was mocked by the soldiers and beaten by the chiefs. Let boys and girls never be such. It is not good to boast of what we can do: it is wiser to try to do our best and to trust that others will find out our accomplishments for themselves. The bantam cock makes a great fuss in the poultry-yard. It struts about as if it were 'monarch of all it surveyed.' It has at least this merit, it has a good courage. But often enough it gets into trouble and is sorely battered by one of the bigger birds, which it has provoked. After all it is only a toy fowl, which is kept not because it is of much use, but to be a pet. On the temple of Apollo at Delphi was written the motto, 'Know thyself.' It is wise for boys and girls to know themselves, to realize that there are far cleverer boys and girls than themselves.

If they will learn modestly all that they can learn, do modestly what they can do and without waiting to be pressed, they will grow up into wise and useful men and women, who will be beloved and honoured by all who know them.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. In Charlotte Brontë's 'Villette' is the character of Ginevra Fanshawe, who was always empty-headed and vain of her good looks. See especially Chapter xii. in the account of 'The Fête,' where she comes to ask Lucy Snowe how she looks.

2. In Thackeray's 'Newcomes' is the odious character of the vain Mrs. Hobson Newcome. See especially Chapter viii.

3. Compare the story of the 'Tower of Babel' in Genesis xi. 1–9.

Lesson XXX

USING OPPORTUNITIES
KINDNESS TO THE NEEDY

Luke xiv. 15–24

(15) And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. (16) But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: (17) and he sent forth his slave at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for *all* things are now ready. (18) And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. (19) And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. (20) And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. (21) And the slave came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his slave, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. (22) And the slave said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. (23) And the lord said unto the slave, Go out into the highways and hedges, and *constrain them* to come in, that my house may be filled. (24) For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Point of the Lesson. This parable of the supper may be said to teach two lessons: (i) The vanity of bad excuses, for which compare Lesson XVIII. (ii) Helpfulness to the needy. In both of these, boys and girls are

apt to fall short usually from want of thought. When they do not want to do something which they ought to do, they make wonderful excuses. Let them remember the French proverb, 'He that excuses himself, accuses himself.' Let them also keep their eyes open and their hands ready to help those who can give them nothing but thanks in return. It is possible that this parable has also the meaning that the Jews were first called and refused to obey the call; hence the Gentiles were called to take their place. For our present purpose the two lessons suggested will be sufficient, though we need to take care that we do not refuse to accept the religion of Jesus, which is freely offered to us.

15. One of the guests, who was present with Jesus at dinner, fancied that in heaven there would be feasting with the blessed ones. Jesus told his story to teach him a deeper lesson. He showed him what a feast in 'the kingdom of God' really was—that is, an entertainment to those who could make no return for it but thanks. The giver would be wonderfully happy, because he had helped his brothers and sisters in their need.

16–17. The Eastern folk did not eat much in the middle of the day. Their meal corresponding to our dinner was a comparatively early supper. The one in the story of Jesus was evidently a great banquet, to which many well-to-do friends had been invited. When the preparations were completed, the host sent out a slave to call in his guests to the feast.

18–20. These had either forgotten that they had promised to come to the banquet and that their absence would cause much inconvenience to their host, or they no longer wanted to come. Hence they began to make all sorts of excuses, most of them bad ones. Jesus singles out three of these to show how feeble they were. The first had bought a field, and he had to go and see it. This was clearly a mere 'put-off.' Why need he go just

then? The field was not likely to run away. Furthermore, he would surely have seen his field before he bought it. Another had bought five teams of oxen, which he would use for ploughing instead of horses. His excuse was just as poor as that of the first. He had no need to begin ploughing just at the time when others were leaving off and going home to supper. The third had married a wife and did not want to leave her. All of these are excuses, which would deceive no one except perhaps those who made them.

21. While the supper was ready to be served, the slave came back without the guests but with their excuses, so that his master was very angry. He determined to give another kind of a party, and he sent his slave out once more to gather in the poor, the wounded, the lame, and the blind to come and eat his feast.

22. The slave went out and found plenty of these ready to accept his invitation, and that without offering any excuses. In they came, these strange but willing guests; but there was not quite enough to fill the big banqueting hall. The slave came to tell his master that some room was still left at the tables.

23. Then he was sent outside of the town to the wayside to find the poor beggars and tramps who were wandering houseless there. He went, and as quickly as he could he filled the great hall with these poor folks to whom a good supper was of great importance.

24. The householder was determined that none of his uncivil guests, whom he originally invited, should taste of his supper. Doubtless he won greater happiness from this banquet than he could have done if he had given it to his rich friends, who might have criticized the dishes, and from whom he expected a similar banquet in return. Boys and girls may learn from this story to be ready to help all those who need their help: then will they hold a feast in 'the kingdom of God.'

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. *Neglect of Opportunities.* When there is something to be done, the best plan is to do it at once, for fear lest it may not be done at all. If we try to make this excuse or that excuse, we shall put off doing our duty until it is too late. In the collieries of our land the men are let down to their work beneath the ground by what is called a 'cage,' which is lowered or drawn up by twisted wire ropes working on large pulleys. A man is told off to test the ropes every day to see that they are strong enough to bear the weight of the cage when it is filled with men. If the ropes have any flaw in them, they might easily break; so the cage would fall with a crash to the bottom of the shaft and the men would be dashed to pieces. What should we think of such a man, if he made excuses instead of testing the rope, as he was bound to do? He might say, 'I am sorry, but I forgot,' or 'I thought the ropes would do without testing to-day.' We should condemn him severely: it would be too late to make excuses after the accident had happened. His employer would say to him, 'You ought not to have forgotten; you had no right to think that the ropes would do without testing. It was your duty to examine them, and you are responsible for the accident.' So the man would be dismissed from his work and he would learn that his excuses were not a whit better than his blameworthy carelessness.

When a boy is sent to learn a trade, but does not give his mind to it, his father perhaps may ask him how it is that he is not getting on at his trade. Then the boy will answer, 'It is so hard,' or 'I don't like the foreman,' or worse still, 'I can never learn that.' I say worse still, because he has not honestly tried to do his best. Ah! most of these excuses are a polite form of lying, or at least of hiding the real truth. If we make up our minds

to do what we have to do at once, and to put our heart and our back into it, we shall not have to make any excuses either to ourselves or to anyone else. That is what our parents expect of us, what our God requires of us. Furthermore, that is the secret of getting on in life ; it is the secret too of learning to be good, upright, and faithful. Excuses are but a thin rope to bear an idle body. Let boys and girls learn to do what they are called upon to do at once without grumbling, and they will have learned one of the most useful lessons in life.

2. *Kindness to those who cannot repay us.* In Thackeray's story of 'The Fatal Boots' young Tom Stubbs was in the habit of giving presents to his father and mother, that they might give him more valuable presents in return. That was a perfectly selfish way of giving. It might be called fishing for gifts rather than giving. Yet it is the way in which many boys and girls, to say nothing of men and women, make presents. That was what the householder in the story of Jesus no doubt expected. He expected that his guests would each in his turn invite him to supper, so that he would get many suppers in return for one. I do not doubt that he enjoyed the one which he actually gave to the poor far more than any of the others which he may have given previously. When boys and girls have anything good given to them they will do well to share some of it with some of those who have nothing to give in return. The proprietors of a considerable evening paper once a year give a supper to their news-boys. It is a delightful sight to see how these enjoy themselves for once in their lives. At one such supper a boy was seen stealthily stowing away a large mince-pie in his ragged handkerchief. The managers of the supper at first thought that he intended to cheat them and to get more mince-pies than he deserved. But they had quite misjudged him. When he was asked what he meant by it, his answer was

touching and beautiful. 'I am doing without my pie, that my little sister may have a treat for supper.' He was a truly kind boy, who loved his sister and was ready to deny himself for her. His conduct is an example for boys and girls who are better off than he was. Let them always think of those who need and help them as far as they can. Then will they have learned one of the most important lessons of Christianity and win priceless pleasure.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. *Excuses.* See Thackeray's 'Virginians,' when Harry Warrington was in prison for debt, and sent to his Aunt Warrington to help him. Her excuse was that 'she was out of town.' Chapter xlix.

2. See the old poem of 'Johnnie Sands.'

3. See Frances E. Cooke's life of 'Dorothea Lynde Dix,' who helped the prisoners.

Lesson XXXI

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Luke xiv. 25–35

(25) Now there went with him great multitudes and he turned, and said unto them, (26) If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. (27) Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? (29) Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, (30) saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (31) Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. (33) So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (34) Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? (35) It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill: *men* cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Point of the Lesson. Jesus does not mean that a son is actually to hate his father and mother, wife and children. What he means is this. If these dearest relations keep us away from discipleship, we are to

disregard their wishes in this respect and to turn a deaf ear to their prayers. When an eminent clergyman of the Church of England, who would almost certainly have been a Bishop, left his beloved Church because he was no longer a Trinitarian, he was obeying this commandment of Jesus. We are called to do our duty, as Jesus taught us, no matter who should oppose us.

25–26. Many of the crowds which followed Jesus imagined that it was an easy thing to be his disciples. Jesus bade them realize that they must not suffer even their nearest and dearest to interfere with their discipleship. Hence he warned all of those, who desired to be his disciples, to count the cost of being such. They would have to give up what seemed most precious to themselves, if they were to be true to him.

27. In ancient times the criminals condemned to be crucified, as an additional punishment, were compelled to carry their cross to the place of crucifixion. So Jesus says that his disciples must ' bear their own cross,' that is, must be ready to deny themselves, and to be unselfish, even if they had to face death.

28–32. Those then, who would be his disciples, must first count the cost of being so. When we build a house, we get an estimate of what it will cost before we begin to build. If we did not do this, we should never know if we should be able to finish our building. If we were forced to leave our house without a roof, we could not live in it, while all who saw it would make fun of us, because we had not counted the cost of our house before we began to build. In like manner, when a king went to war with another, he was bound to measure his forces and to see what they were made of before he went into the battle. If he failed to do that, he might be miserably beaten. So Jesus says that all who would follow him must first count the cost and see if they were willing to pay it. His disciples are bound to give up much which

is dear to themselves and to others. They are bound to speak without swearing, to be kind to one another, to love their enemies, to be forgiving. They have to take care to do no wrong, so far as is possible to them, but to do right in a loving spirit. If anyone try to hinder them in this, they must leave them behind, no matter how dear they may be to them.

33. What Jesus means by renouncing all that a man has, is to use it only to help him in his discipleship by being kind and helpful to others. He uses a strong phrase which his hearers would very well understand. They could not follow him and be worldly, selfish, and sinful. Those things they must give up. Nay, if their worldly goods hindered them from being his disciples, they must be ready to give them up. Unselfishness lies at the root of Christian discipleship. Boys and girls must be ready to give up their own way, and above all else to give up their wrongdoing. Then they may learn to follow Jesus faithfully.

34. 'Salt' was a useful thing so long as it was salt. It must be remembered that salt in Palestine was got from the salt marshes, and contained much white powder that was not salt, and could not be used as salt. If therefore the real salt had melted away, there was nothing left but a pinch of white powder, which would not help to give anything a flavour.

35. This white powder was only fit to be thrown away. So a man who had not love, that true salt of a Christian character, was good for little. We have to keep that sacred salt of love in our hearts, to let it season the whole of our lives: then shall we indeed be disciples of Jesus, ready to deny ourselves to help one another. Boys and girls cannot learn too soon to be unselfish, so that the habit may grow into their lives. Then will they be happy themselves, and make their own lives and those of others sweeter and more joyous.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Count the cost. One of our best known ministers had a brilliant prospect before him as a young man. His friends had tried to persuade him not to go into the ministry. He had a post in a public office, which might have led to a great fortune and wide distinction. But he did not listen to the advice of his friends. He felt the call to the ministry, and for long years he has been one of the most devoted of our ministers. He had to count the cost and he was ready to pay it. Hence he is held in affectionate honour by all who know him.

Boys and girls have to count the cost of any aim in life. Does a girl want to be a school-teacher ; she may have to wait a long time before she is earning any money. Sometimes her parents may wish that she had gone to the mill. Moreover, she has to be prepared to give up many harmless pleasures, so that she may pass her examinations and prepare herself for her calling. But the cost does not end there. The calling of a teacher is a sacred calling. The teacher has to give up much, if the pupils are to learn anything worth learning. The cost of any noble aim is self-denial.

The great man of science, to whom knowledge seems like an open book, has had to give up long hours when he was a boy, which other boys were spending in happy games and the like. He has to give up many tastes, such as music, painting, and similar things, if he is to win his ambition, to make some clever invention, or to find out some great discovery. His knowledge is not gained in a day. What seems so easy to him has been acquired at the cost of much self-restraint and positive self-denial. His knowledge is the crown of his unselfish work.

Those brave men who are working their way towards the South Pole have to make great sacrifices, to endure much that less brave men can neither give up nor endure.

They may be for more than a year away from their wives and children. They may spend the greater part of the year without daylight. They have to eat coarse food, and to live for weeks together without washing themselves. They have to face cold so intense that their fingers and toes are in danger of being frost-bitten and of breaking off like bits of sealing-wax. These and many other things they have to reckon up before they go on their voyages of discovery, to consider if they can endure them. Many have succeeded and brought home wonderful discoveries and accurate scientific observations. It seems easy when we read of their brave deeds and brave endurance by our cosy fireside. But it is hard beyond all telling. That is how Sir Ernest Shackleton has won glory and renown. So with the great traveller who finds a path through hitherto all but untrodden forests, and makes discoveries of new rivers, lakes, and mountains, or rather of rivers, lakes, and mountains known only to those native tribes living near to them. Those who have read Stanley's account of his journey 'Through Darkest Africa' will realize what he had to endure, and how he faced trials and hardships with a courage given to few.

Even in quieter callings, like that of the doctor, the same endurance has to be undergone. The student has to give up much to train himself for the noble healing art. When he is qualified and able to practise, he has to get up at all hours of the night to answer sometimes selfish and needless calls. He has to give up much of his precious leisure, when he has to fight a hard battle with disease. He has to face the risk of contagion and infection. He has to love his calling, if he is to be successful in it. It seems very pleasant and happy to be driving from patient to patient; but most doctors come home at night worn out, yet never certain if they may not be called out to some place, it may be far away on the hill-side, or in the gloomy slum of a great city.

In like manner boys and girls, who want to lead good and loving lives, have to give up much. They must learn to govern themselves, that their words and deeds may be kind. If they do this faithfully, they will be true disciples of Jesus, and the Father of Infinite love will bless them and give them peace and happiness in their self-denial.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See the heroic self-denial of the 'Two Thousand' ministers, who left their livings rather than read the Book of Common Prayer against their consciences and became the founders of Non-conformity. Green's 'Short History,' Chapter ix., Section 2.
2. A. N. Blatchford's 'Landmarks of Religious History,' under 'The Two Thousand.'
3. Frances E. Cooke's, 'The Story of Theodore Parker' and 'The Story of St. Francis of Assisi.'
4. 'Michael Servetus' in 'Memorable Unitarians,' pp. 13–17.

Lesson XXXII

THE LOST SHEEP

Luke xv. 1–7

(1) Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him for to hear him. (2) And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

(3) And he spake unto them this parable, saying, (4) What man of you having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? (5) And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. (6) And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. (7) I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, *more* than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance.

Point of the Lesson. Jesus had a crowd of the despised classes of his countrymen about him, when he uttered the following parable. He meant to teach them that God our Father loves all of his children so dearly, that he will suffer none of them to go astray finally. If not here on earth, there at least in heaven, they will have a chance of finding their way back to him. At the same time he uttered a rebuke to the Pharisees and scribes, who could not understand his having anything to do with such persons, whom they would not have touched willingly with the hem of their garments.

1–2. The 'Publicans' were the 'Tax-gatherers' appointed by the Roman government to collect taxes for it. Hence they were hated. No doubt they were often unjust and made money for themselves by taking more than was their due. The 'sinners' were those who did not keep the Law of Moses exactly, and were amongst the lowest of their race. These appealed to Jesus, who longed to help them and to lead them to God. The Pharisees and scribes, who were amongst the most highly esteemed of their race, could not understand the loving, pitying heart of Jesus. Hence they deemed him to be no true teacher of righteousness, who mingled freely with the unrighteous. So Jesus spoke to them and to the 'Publicans and sinners' the three parables, of which 'The Lost Sheep' was one.

3–4. The Eastern shepherd was kinder than ours. He had no skilful dog to aid him in keeping his flock. He knew his sheep by name, and they would follow him when he called them. The shepherd of this story had a hundred sheep. When he counted them up before sending them into the fold at evening, he missed one of them. He was not content simply to put the ninety-nine into the fold, so long as one was missing. So he went out into the wild pasture ground ('wilderness'), searching everywhere along the hill-side, down in the valley, and far and near for the missing sheep.

5. At length he found it somewhere far away and so weary that it could not crawl home. He did not leave it there to be a prey to the wild animals which haunt such places. He lifted it on to his shoulders, and took it home, glad at heart that he had found it. Then he put all the sheep together into the fold and was content to leave them for the night.

6. But he could not keep his gladness to himself. Just as he had told his fellow-shepherds of his loss, he was eager to tell them of his recovery. He called them

together, and told them the tale of his wandering through the wild pasture-grounds, of how hard his toil had been, when he heard its distant cry and found the truant. As he needed their sympathy in his loss, so he needed their sympathy in his joy.

7. Then Jesus drew that moral for all time, which many who call themselves by his name are slow to learn. The sinful soul is infinitely dear to God, and there is more joy in heaven over one such who has found his way back than over many who have not sinned. Jesus does not mean to underrate the virtues of the righteous. But he does mean to give a warning against self-righteousness, such as was the mark of some of the scribes and Pharisees. They would not have gone far to get one such sinner back. They contented themselves with keeping aloof from him and despising him. Jesus felt that his mission was especially to those who needed it most. His own loving heart taught him the infinite love of the Father of all. The father and the mother in a good home may have had one child which has always been wicked and wilful even. But if that child when it is grown to manhood turns over a new leaf, how intense and precious is their joy. Under the human figure of the kindly shepherd does Jesus represent the measureless love of God to all of his children, especially to the sinners. We ourselves should learn to be glad when anyone who has done us a wrong comes to us asking for forgiveness. Nay, more, we should be ready to forgive him, thinking how much God has forgiven us. May we learn from our childhood to be loving and forgiving, to help and not to hinder those who have done wrong to ' see themselves ' and to turn to the right.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Lost Sheep. In a dale in Westmorland stands a pretty farm-house nestling amidst tall trees, with well-

cultivated fields and deep rich pastures lying along a silvery river. The father and the mother lived there with six children, some of them all but grown up and helping with the farm-work. It is a happy family; yet one of the children was not good. He was a fine sturdy little fellow; but he would be disobedient and he would go his own way. His father and mother never knew what mischief he might be doing, if he were out of their sight for a moment or two. They had expressly forbidden him to go to a certain distant valley, where they had a few fields, which fed a number of sheep. It was a dangerous place for a child to reach without help. A narrow plank over a little waterfall had to be crossed, and the path lay along a slippery edge for much of its course. But the boy, who was called Mark, was determined to go on the first opportunity. His big brothers could go, he thought, why should not he? He never thought of the pain and anxiety which he would cause his parents by disobeying them. He only thought of his own way, which was quite wrong.

At length he found his chance: one long summer afternoon he went wandering from the hayfield, where the haymakers were too busily employed in their work to keep watch over him. He was not missed until evening, when all the rest of the family with the men were gathered round the well-filled table. The mother looked at his empty place, and instantly her mind was filled with many fears. 'Where could Mark be?' she asked over and over again. At first his father tried to quiet her anxiety by saying that he would soon come back; he had only wandered away for a little, and he was usually regular at meal-times. But, as the evening wore on, he in his turn began to grow anxious, and he thought, could his lad have gone to that forbidden valley and disobeyed him? He sent out all of the men and his elder sons to search in all directions for the missing boy.

They scattered far and near along the hill-sides and through the neighbouring dales. But none of them found a trace of Mark.

In the meantime the father with one of his sons went straight to the valley. They came to the dangerous plank which crossed the little waterfall. There to their horror they saw Mark's jacket. They grew all but wild with alarm. They thought that he must surely have fallen over the plank into the stream and been drowned. Still they kept on their way, until they came to a spot where a rude shepherd's path led down to the bottom of the valley. When they reached this spot, they heard a low moaning far away beneath them. They went down the steep path as quickly as they could, and there at the bottom they found their little lad sorely bruised and with a sprained ankle. If they had not found him, he must have spent the night there moaning and in great pain. When his father found him, his first impulse was to scold him severely. But when he saw how weak and weary the boy looked, he could not find it in his heart to do that. He carried him on his shoulders up the steep path, over the narrow plank and safely to the cheery home. When his mother saw Mark, she was almost beside herself with joy. Both the father and the mother felt more gladness in the recovery of their boy, whom they had thought dead, than over the rest of their children, who had caused them no anxiety. The doctor was sent for, who bandaged up the sprained limb and put healing ointment on the little fellow's bruises, so that he was able to sleep in comfort. When he had gone the father took down the old Family Bible and read out the story of 'The Lost Sheep,' and he knelt down and thanked God for giving him back his boy again. So Jesus said, the Father of us all rejoices over his children who have wandered from him and are brought back to him once more.

Let boys and girls remember not to disobey their fathers and mothers, and they will spare them much pain and be less likely to suffer much themselves. But let them never be afraid to acknowledge their disobedience or to ask pardon for it. That is the best way of making some slight atonement for wrongdoing. When it has been made let them try to do wrong no more.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See Kingsley's 'Water Babies,' where Tom has to make up for his wrongdoing. Especially Chapter vi.

2. See Thackeray's 'Pendennis,' where Pendennis is plucked for his degree and has to go back to Oxbridge to get it. Chapters xix., xx.

Lesson XXXIII

THE LOST DRACHMA

Luke xv. 8–10

(8) Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? (9) And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. (10) Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Point of the Lesson. Those who do wrong are like the lost 'drachma.' God searches for them until he finds them. Then He rejoices over the one found, more than over the nine which were not lost. In other words, when we do wrong, we are lost for a time. But when we repent of our wrongdoing, we are found and rejoice in the forgiving love of God. The same great truth is taught more fully in the parable of 'The Prodigal Son,' which immediately follows.

8. The 'piece of silver' was a coin about the size of our sixpence, but a little thicker. It was worth in actual silver from 8d. to 10d., but would purchase seven times as much as either of those sums. It corresponded to the Roman 'denarius,' which is usually translated in the New Testament by the misleading word 'penny.' It was the common wages for a day's work in Palestine. Moreover, Eastern women had the habit of boring a

hole through several such coins and wearing them upon their foreheads. In this case they were sometimes regarded as bringing good fortune like our lucky half-pennies, which also have a hole bored through them. The woman in the little parable may have had no other ornament, or jewellery, of which, like most Eastern women, and some others, she would be very fond. Hence she would be most anxious to find the missing coin. She may also have taken her ornament as a charm against evil, or a kind of amulet. If she did that, she would not feel safe until she had found 'what she had lost.' It was night when she missed the little silver piece of money. She lighted her lamp. She looked everywhere. She set her lamp on its usual stand, and getting her broom she swept her room in every part. At length she saw a glimmer of something bright shining in one of the corners. She picked it up with a deep sense of relief and thankfulness.

9. No doubt she had told her neighbours of her loss, who had sympathized with her and bidden her be of good cheer, since she was sure to find the missing coin. But when their good wishes were fulfilled, as she had not been able to keep her trouble to herself, so she was not able to keep her joy to herself. With the lost coin found once more, she would go about saying, 'Bless me, since God hath blessed me; I have found my lost coin.' So her neighbours would be glad with her, though they could not be just as glad as she was. She was able to put together her ornament once more and to bind it upon her forehead. She would now feel secure from all harm, and she would be proud of the silver circlet which shone on her brow.

10. So Jesus says, 'The angels of God rejoice over one sinner that repents.' 'Repents': upon that word hangs the whole meaning of the parable. When boys have done wrong their consciences trouble them. They

feel something within them, which makes them feel uncomfortable and often fills them with fear. Sometimes that fear is simply that they will be found out and punished. Still they are sorry for what they have done and would give much to have it undone. What they have got to do, is not to wait ' until they are found out,' but to go to their father and mother, or their teacher, and confess the wrong which they have done. Though they may have grieved these by their wrongdoing, yet they will have pleased them by being honest enough to be sorry for what they have done. If the wrong is never found out, as sometimes happens, though seldom, God has seen it done and will punish them in one way or another. Let boys and girls never be stubborn when they have done wrong. They will not make themselves any the happier by keeping their wrongdoing to themselves. Their conscience will trouble them and they may get some one else blamed for what they have done. That is mean, unmanly, and unwomanly. When once they have told their wrong-doing and taken their punishment, they will have given great joy to their parents and teachers, and they will know that God has forgiven them too. Boys and girls, remember to repent when you have done wrong, and try not to do wrong again. Then will you be true and strong and filled with quiet peace.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The blessedness of repentance. In an old town there was a big country house standing a little way back from the street in a fine old-fashioned garden. In it lived a family whose ancestors had lived in it for many generations before them. It contained many valuable things, which had been gathered together first by one then by another of the family. Amongst them was a ' rose noble,' a gold coin of the time of Edward III. It was believed

to be a source of good luck to the house and to those who lived in it, though of course it could not make any difference to their fortunes and to their lives. The youngest of the family was a little girl, who, seeing the drawer open with the coin in it, could not resist the temptation, but went off with it and hid it in a safe chink in the wall of her bedroom. At first the noble was not missed, and she looked at it every time that she had a chance, when no one was near her, no one but God who saw what she had done. But one day her father was going to show the coin to a friend, when he could not find it. At once he became very anxious, as it was one of his most valued treasures, and he set every one to look for it. He was so angry at its loss, as well as so grieved, that his little daughter was afraid to tell him what she had done. He locked up the drawer, that the thief could not put it back unnoticed, and he never dreamed that his child had taken and had hidden it.

There was great confusion in the house. Every one but the real culprit was accused of having taken the coin. The little maid kept her own counsel, though she was in continual terror of being found out and perhaps whipped. She dared not trust her father's love for her, and she was miserable. No one ever thought of asking her, though every one else in the house was cross-examined keenly about the missing coin. The servants were suspected, and one of them had notice to leave given to her, though she protested that she was quite innocent. But it was her task to dust and tidy the room, where the cabinet was kept, in which was the drawer where the noble had been always placed. Though as a matter of fact she was quite innocent, she was not believed, for she knew the value of the coin and what it meant to the house. She went crying upstairs, knowing that she had to leave in the morning and that on a false accusation. The little girl was put to bed: but that night she could

not sleep. She thought of the servant who was sent away for her fault. She thought she could hear voices whispering, 'Elsie is a thief. Elsie is a thief. She will be locked up.' She heard her father threaten to have the thief locked up, if he could lay his hands upon him. She had a miserable night until the morning came, when she was dressed and stole silently downstairs. Then she made up her mind to do what she knew was right, though she was much afraid of suffering severe punishment. She stole upstairs again noiselessly and took out the coin from its hiding-place. Then coming down into the breakfast-room and nestling very softly against her father, she said tearfully, 'O daddie, I'm so sorry I took the noble out of the drawer when it was open, and I've brought it back again. Please don't send Lizzie away.' She was sobbing partly from fear, partly from shame, while great tears kept rolling down her cheeks. Then her father looked into her upturned face. He saw at once that she had been more severely punished than any whipping could have done. So he said very gently, 'I'm sorry my little girl, whom I trusted, could have done such a thing; but I'm glad that she has confessed what she has done and I forgive her. She has not only found the coin, but she has found her character. But she must go to Lizzie and beg her pardon.' The little maid was off like a shot. She found Lizzie the servant, and putting her arms round her neck she exclaimed, 'I took it, Lizzie: you won't need to go away now.' Lizzie was deeply moved, and she kissed her little mistress. So there was joy in that house, because 'what was lost was found,' and because the child had had the courage in the end to confess what she had done.

That is what repentance means. Let boys and girls take the lesson to heart, and they will learn to do what they ought to do and to do wrong to none.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See Gould's 'Moral Lessons,' 1st Series under 'Repentance.'
2. See young Martin Chuzzlewit's acknowledgment of his injustice to Tom Pinch in Dickens's 'Martin Chuzzlewit.' Chapter lii.
3. See Mr. Dombey's repentance for all his ill-treatment of Florence in Dickens's 'Dombey and Son.' Chapters lix. and lxii.

Lesson XXXIV

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

Luke xv. 11–32

(11) And he said, A certain man had two sons: (12) and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of *thy* substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. (13) And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. (14) And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. (15) And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. (16) And he would fain have been filled with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. (17) But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! (18) I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: (19) I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. (20) And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. (21) And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. (22) But the father said to his slaves, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: (23) and bring the fatted calf, *and* kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: (24) for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry. (25) Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. (26) And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might

be. (27) And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. (28) But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and intreated him. (29) But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine: and *yet* thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: (30) but when this thy son came, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. (31) And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. (32) But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive *again*; and *was* lost, and is found.

Point of the Lesson This story gives its own moral so clearly, that many words are not needed to explain it. Repent and you will be forgiven. Of course repentance means, first, to see that you have done wrong; second, to confess your wrongdoing to the one whom you have wronged; third, to ask for pardon; fourth, to do your best not to do wrong again. It teaches the supreme lesson, that God forgives his children, who truly repent of their wrongdoing, and that he needs no one to induce him to forgive them.

11–12. In this case it was the younger son, who asked his aged father to divide his property between the two, which he did.

13. The younger son did not stop at home to use his money wisely: he went far away, where his father would not be able to hear anything about his doings. Then he began to waste his money in drunkenness and worse.

14–16. He soon came to an end of his money, as those do who waste it upon unworthy things. But when a famine fell upon the land, he had not even a morsel of bread. Though he was a Jew who hated pigs and was forbidden to eat of their flesh, all the work that he could get was to feed them. He was so hungry that he quarrelled with the pigs for their coarse food. Not one of those upon whom he had spent his money, came to

help him, or to give him so much as a single crust.

17–19. When he was at the depth of his need, he began to see what he had done, and how he had wronged his father. He thought of the happy home which he had left, where the hired work-people had enough to eat, while he was dying of hunger. Then he made up his mind to go back to his father and to ask to be taken on as a 'hired servant,' since he had forfeited his claims as a son. He knew that he deserved nothing from his father, but he determined to trust to his kindness to employ him as a workman.

20–21. Back he sneaked off home. The moment that his father saw him, ragged and wayworn, he ran to meet him, taking him in his arms, with the words, 'My son, my dear son.' He began his sad confession, when he found that he was already forgiven.

22–24. The father had his rags taken from him and good clothes put upon him. He had sandals put upon his feet and a ring upon his finger. 'The lost was found, the dead was alive.' So the household began to rejoice over the repentant sinner.

25–30. When the elder son came in from the field, he heard the sound of mirth and joy. When he found out that his brother had come back, he was angry and unforgiving, and he would not enter the house. He complained to his father, that though he had been an obedient son, he had had nothing given to him to feast his friends. He was just a little hard and unforgiving. That is where he was wrong.

31–32. His father's answer was a beautiful one, which can teach all of us who are hard and unforgiving, as we sometimes are. He said in effect: 'All that you say is true, my son. But think of it in another way. Your brother was lost to all of us, and now he is found. He was dead to all of us, and now he is alive. Surely I am doing right to rejoice over my dear son, who has

found his way home sorry and repentant. Surely you ought to be glad to welcome home your brother, though indeed he has done wrong and wasted his substance.'

The whole lesson is the need of repentance, when we have done wrong. The word means 'turning back.' That is what we must do when we have sinned. We shall never recover the wasted time. The younger son did not get back the money which he had spent. But we shall be assured of God our Father's welcome home.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Sin and Forgiveness. In large families sometimes there is one scapegrace upon whom the care of father and mother seems wasted. He will not try to do right, though he may have a warm generous heart of his own. In a little Cornish village two centuries ago and more was such a family with such a son. He had one sister and many brothers, all of whom went out into the world and did well. His sister stopped at home and took care of her mother, when her father died. The old man had had a little money. He had educated his children, as far as he had been able, and he had done his best to give each a good start in the world. But the one boy, Oliver, named fondly after the great Cromwell but most unlike him, had played truant instead of going to school. If he did find his way there he never did any work, but spent his time in leading every piece of mischief against the master and his usher. At length he came to his father and asked him for some money, that he might go to the New World to try to make his fortune there. His father gave him a good sum and paid his passage on an outward bound ship. Years passed away, and nothing was heard of him. Though the rest of their children were good and doing well, the old couple longed for the absent son, who had not had the grace to send them a single word of his doings. The old man died,

and the mother looked worn and anxious with her longing for that beloved yet disobedient son. In the meantime he had reached America ; but he carried his careless ways with him, and he seldom managed to do right. He gambled away what his father had given him ; he robbed the first master who employed him ; he was put into a dark and evil-smelling prison and narrowly escaped with his life. Here young Oliver had time to see himself as he really was. He thought with intense longing of the old home with its apple-orchard and trim garden. He thought of the brothers and sisters whom he had once loved. More than all else he thought of the father and mother to whom he had behaved so ill, of all their love and kindness to him. Then for the first time he began to repent really of what he had done. He made up his mind, if he escaped the death-sentence, which was the custom in those days for stealing, to work his passage home, and ask his parents to forgive him. He knew not that his father had gone already to his grave mourning over him, but forgiving him with all his heart upon his death-bed.

By some means he escaped the death-sentence, and after several years he was let out of prison. He crept down to the port and got work on a homeward bound ship. Long months he was tossed upon ' the world of waters ' ; but at length he found his way to Plymouth. He had a few shillings due to him, and he set out to walk home. The way was long and hard, and he was often weary and hungry. But he husbanded his money, to make it last out, until he got home. At length the once familiar village was in sight. He went slowly up to the garden-gate of the old home. That little garden was beautiful as of old, and a thousand memories rushed over him as he saw it. Who was that standing aged and bent at the gate ? It was his mother, who had gone thither every day since he went away, to look for her lost son. She

saw him and knew him in a moment. 'God has been very good to me,' she said. In another moment he was in her arms. 'Oh, my son, my son!' she exclaimed, 'how could you leave us? Your father died forgiving you.' Oliver's heart was deeply moved. His sister too forgave him, and he resolved that, come what might, he would work like an honest man to help her and his mother.

Such is an old story from an old book. It is true to the life. May our God teach us to repent over our wrongdoing, and forgive us our sins.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. See the story of George Rouncewell in Dickens's 'Bleak House.' He had left home as a soldier. He had got into prison on a false charge of murder, when his mother came to him, See Chapter lv. Compare Chapter lxiii, where George goes to see his brother.

2. See Charlotte Brontë's 'Jane Eyre,' where Jane forgives her aunt Mrs. Reed her injustice, Chapter xxi.

Lesson XXXV

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke xvi. 19–31

(19) Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, living in mirth and splendour every day: (20) and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate full of sores, (21) and desiring to be fed with the *crumbs* that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores. (22) And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried. (23) And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. (25) But Abraham said, Child, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. (26) And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and none may cross from thence to us. (27) And he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; (28) for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come to this place of torment. (29) But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. (30) And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. (31) And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.

Point of the Lesson. The point of this parable is that neglected duties and opportunities bring their own

unfailing punishment. The rich man had lived an idle, thoughtless life, so he was punished. Lazarus had lived a sorrowful life, so he found comfort after death. The details of this story must not be pressed into the service of the doctrine of eternal punishment. The parables in most cases were uttered to teach one definite lesson; their details were intended to increase the picturesque power of the story.

19. Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees, who thought that wealth was a mark of God's especial favour. He shows them that wealth may count on earth, but it only counts in heaven in so far as it is used faithfully. This rich man thought of nothing but his fine raiment and the pleasures of the table, until punishment fell upon him.

20–21. This Lazarus has nothing to do with the brother of Martha and Mary. He is represented as a beggar of the poorest kind. Yet the rich man had not seen his duty to him. His only friends were the half-wild dogs which ran about the streets. They did what they could. They licked his sores. The rich man's sin was soulless selfishness.

22. Lazarus died and was carried to Abraham's bosom. In other words, he was taken to the feast of Paradise, where he reclined on the couch resting on Abraham's bosom, as his favoured guest. Of course this must not be taken literally. It is intended to present a picture of happiness in the other world.

23. The rich man's fate was different. He was taken to bear punishment for his selfishness in Hades or 'the unseen world,' where the Jews believed that God would punish sinners for a time.

24. To add to his punishment, with remorse flaming in his soul, he could see the Lazarus whom he had neglected afar off and at peace. This description of the rich man's punishment is only typical of the intensity of the punishment which follows sin. He asked for pity

and received none at the moment of the punishment. The punishment must be endured, and the heart changed, before relief can come to the sinner.

25. Abraham's answer was stern, yet it began with a tender word, 'Child.' He pointed out to the rich man how he had received his good things, and how he had misused them. Lazarus had had only woe, hence now he had peace.

26. The great gulf is one which can only be bridged over by the sinner himself. Before any help can come to him, he must have the changed heart. As Archdeacon Farrar says, 'Change of place does not produce change of soul.' The rich man, unless he had changed his selfish spirit, could not have been happy even in heaven. Boys and girls, when they have done wrong, are not happy at home or at school until they have repented of it and confessed their wrongdoing. One who has done wrong must minister to himself by real repentance, which shows itself in a changed life.

27–28. The rich man shows the first sign of his repentance. He thinks of his five brothers living just as carelessly as he had done. He begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn them of their peril.

29. Once more Abraham's answer was stern. Let them pay attention to the teachers, whom they profess to follow. Then they will quit them of their selfishness.

30–31. Once more the rich man begs for one risen from the dead to go to his brothers. Abraham in reply utters the pathetic truth, that if men will not use the opportunities which they have, they will not repent under extraordinary circumstances.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Beware of neglecting duties and opportunities. The chief lesson of the story of the rich man and Lazarus is the

danger of neglecting duties and opportunities. The rich man ought to have seen to the needs of Lazarus instead of spending his time in idle and luxurious living. Terrible punishment falls upon those who neglect their opportunities.

An old man spent much of his time in the public-house, and most of his money also. He knew that he was by no means doing the best for himself and his wife. But he had nothing to occupy his thoughts when his work was over. That old man had once been a boy who had had many opportunities afforded to him. There was a school to which his father would have sent him, if he would have gone. But no, he would not. He thought that his own selfish pleasure was the best thing for him to pursue. As years rolled on, he found out his mistake when it was too late to remedy it. He grew up into a thoughtless and ignorant man. He could not even read. So when he had grown too old for what he would have called his pleasures, namely, fighting, dog-racing, pigeon-shooting, pigeon-flying (a noble list of enjoyments!) he had nothing to occupy his time. The daily paper was a sealed book to him. All he could do was to drink, and that he did very well. But he was not happy in the punishment which he had made for himself by his neglect and wrongdoing. Many a time he would say, 'Ah, if I had been wiser when I was a lad! I should have had something better to do with my spare time.' That old man had once been a boy with many natural gifts, all of which he had abused; with many opportunities, most of which he had neglected. Hence his confession in his old age was the sad acknowledgment of a wasted life. Use the moments as they pass in healthy study and healthy exercise. Let boys and girls beware that they do not waste their lives, like that old man, lest they grow up into worthless and disreputable old men and women. Let them never waste the precious hours

of leisure in worthless pursuits. If, as Solon did, they will 'daily grow old adding to their stock of knowledge,' they will spend a bright and happy life and enjoy an honoured old age.

In like manner there are duties which boys and girls must never neglect to do. One or two examples may suffice. They must 'honour their father and their mother,' while they have them with them. They must be kind, obedient, and loving to them, doing their utmost to help them and to make their home happy. When Henry II was King of England, he was a great man, one of the greatest of all of our kings, yet he was never happy. His own sons one after another continually rebelled against him. They did nothing to help him to bear the cares of his government. They quarrelled amongst themselves, and all but broke his strong heart. When he had passed away from his troubles on earth, his eldest surviving son saw him as he lay in his coffin. Then Richard's thoughtlessness left him and his heart was smitten with bitter repentance. He saw how completely he had failed to do his duty to his father, when that father was taken away from him and it was too late. He would have given much to have had his father back again, that he might tell him how sorrowful he was for his misconduct. But that could not be.

Boys and girls, never have that sin upon your consciences. Be kind and thoughtful to your fathers and mothers, while you have them yet with you. I have heard a poor and forlorn mother in the workhouse cursing her children for their neglect of her. She was there for no fault of her own, but because they were too selfish to repay their great debt to her. Yet not one of them would even do so much as go to see her, while all of them never spoke of their mother save as a disgrace to them. They were a disgrace to her and sinners of the meanest type. She has passed away now, and they

are cut to the heart with remorse for their wickedness, when it is too late.

Similarly with all other duties, the duty of loving brothers and sisters and of being kind to all—let boys and girls remember to do these from the beginning, and they will grow up into good and thoughtful men and women, a blessing to others and at peace with God and with themselves.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO BE LOOKED UP BY THE TEACHER.

1. Mrs. Hemans has a striking poem on 'Richard Cœur-de-Lion at the Bier of his Father,' which will serve to emphasize the illustration already given.

2. In George Eliot's 'Mill on the Floss,' Tom Tulliver realized too late his duty to tend his sister lovingly. Book vii., Chapter v.

THE END

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